

# **The Question “Who is Dasein?” in *Being and Time***

*The existential analysis of the “I am”*

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate School of

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Hong Kong

1999





## Abstract

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger demonstrates that Dasein's Being-one's-Self in its everydayness is the "They" [*das Man*] (see BT 167). The "They" who keeps saying "I" is shown to be an indefinite nobody that Dasein is in fact *not* itself. Yet, this inauthentic self is elaborated as a genuine self-showing of the phenomenon of Dasein. How do we understand this seemingly unthinkable explication of Dasein's self in its *not* being itself? This is the question of this thesis. This problem has to be rendered in view of Heidegger's understanding of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world. This understanding distinguishes the Dasein analytic from the traditional anthropology that presents man as present-at-hand. And in this understanding, the question of "who" of Dasein gains a new meaning which distinguishes the "I" from present-at-hand. The traditional anthropology is criticized for not seeing the phenomenon of the world as an ontological structure of Dasein. The world is not a sum-total of things but a referential totality wherein Dasein always finds itself in the midst of intraworldly entities. Heidegger criticizes that Descartes' *sum* and Kant's "I think" are insufficient because they fail to recognize phenomenon of the world. He points out that whenever Dasein says "I", it does not express itself as a I-thing but an "I-am-in-the-world". The "I" who is a Being-in in the world is always a Being-alongside to the intraworldly things and a Being-with-one-another with the others. This "I" does not possess the certitude but is only an average anyone—the indefinite "They". However, this "They" belongs to the genuine existential structure of Dasein and it always expresses Dasein's selfhood that is freed from the traditional meaning of "I".

## 撮要

在《存有與時間》裏，海德格展示了此在在其日常性中作為其自身就是「他人」。那不斷地說「我」的「他人」被指示為一個不確定的不是任何人。如此，「此在」實非其自己。然而，這非本真的自我被更詳細地說明為此在這現象的真實自我展現。我們如何去了解這看似難以設想的解釋呢？即「此在」的自我就在於其不作為它自己。這便是本文的中心問題。海德格把此在了解到此在是一在世存有，令此在分析由將人類展示為在手存有的傳統人類學中分辨開來。由此，「此在是『誰』？」這問題便須被賦與新的意義，不會把「我」闡明為一在手存有。海德格批評傳統人類學對於世界這一現象之作為此在的存有格式一無所知，世界並非事物之總和，但卻是一意義網絡的總體。此在總是在此意義網絡的總體內發現自己處身於云云世間事物之中。當此在說「我」時這「我」並不意謂著一個事物，它卻展現出而此在之「我在世界之中」。這個在世之中的「我」是一個不確定而且與任何人無異的「他人」。不過這「他人」作為一個非本真的我就是此在的存活結構。如此海德格所指的「他人」不指涉一個外在的他者，而只是在描述此在之存活結構。



# Table of Content

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>摘要.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of Content.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Abbreviation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
A. The obvious answer to the who-question.....	8
B. The structure of this Thesis .....	13
<b>Chapter I The Question of “Who” and the Question of Being.....</b>	<b>19</b>
A. Introduction.....	19
B. The Question of Being and Dasein’s Understanding of Being.....	22
1. The clarification of the structure of the Question.....	22
2. The circularity of the question.....	27
C. Dasein’s understanding of Being as its essential characteristic.....	30
1. The preliminary indication of the meaning of Dasein .....	30
2. The analytic of Dasein as distinguished from Anthropology .....	36
D. The question of who of Dasein.....	43
E. Conclusion .....	49
<b>Chapter II Confronting Descartes’ and Kant’s “I am” .....</b>	<b>52</b>
A. Introduction.....	52
B. The Criticism on the Cartesian Ego.....	54
1. Indeterminacy of the <i>sum</i> .....	57

2.	Indeterminacy of substantiality .....	60
C.	The Criticism on the Kantian Cogito .....	62
1.	The Paralogism of Pure Reason .....	64
2.	The fall back to the indeterminacy of substance .....	67
3.	Kant's return to the <i>res cogitans</i> .....	70
D.	Conclusion .....	78
<b>Chapter III The everyday "I"—so close yet far away .....</b>		<b>81</b>
A.	Introduction .....	81
B.	Dasein's everyday work-world .....	83
1.	The Heideggerian concept of the "world" .....	85
2.	The ontico-existential explication of Dasein's work-world .....	87
3.	The ontologico-existential explanation of worldhood .....	89
4.	The work-world and the lack of privilege of Dasein's I-here .....	93
C.	Dasein's everyday with-world .....	97
1.	The primacy of Dasein over the encountering of Other .....	99
2.	Dasein's everyday Being-I and the Others .....	102
D.	Conclusion .....	107
<b>Conclusion .....</b>		<b>111</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>		<b>124</b>

**Text of Heidegger:**

BT	<i>Being and Time</i>
BP	<i>The Basic Problems of Phenomenology</i>
BW	<i>The Basic Writings: revised and expanded edition</i>
HCT	<i>History of the Concept of Time, Prolegomena</i>
MFL	<i>The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic,</i>
WCT	<i>What is Called Thinking?</i>
WT	<i>What is a Thing?</i>

**Text of Kant:**

CPR	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
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# Introduction

“Who is this Dasein?” Heidegger answers, “Because Dasein has in each case mineness [*Jemeinigkeit*], one must always use a *personal* pronoun when one addresses it: ‘I am’, ‘you are’” (BT 68). What is more obvious than the “I” who this Dasein is? The question of “I am” is surely the most frequently studied problem in the philosophy. Perhaps, the Delphi inscription, “Know Thyself”, has already determined the fate of philosophy. In Modern philosophy, Descartes discovers the “I am” as the first unshakable truth. The “I”, the “human subject” rises to the center of the Modern philosophical thinking. Heidegger says:

It will be expected that ontology now takes the subject as exemplary entity and interprets the concept of Being by looking to the mode of Being of the subject—that henceforth the subject’s way of Being becomes an ontological problem. But that is precisely what does not happen (BP 123).

The question of Being remains to be the “single thought” of Heidegger.<sup>1</sup> The question of who of Dasein is also posed in his way of questioning Being. Heidegger thinks that the ontological determination is missing in the history of philosophy. The answer to the question, “I am”, has not been clearly explicated as well. Does the “I” stand for me and nothing further? In what way does Heidegger see that this answer is not good enough to the question?

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<sup>1</sup> Otto pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger’s Path of Thinking*, trans. Daniel Magurshak and Sigmund Barber, Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanity Press International, 1987, p.2.



## **A. The obvious answer to the who-question**

In §4 and §9 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger states that Dasein is an entity that its Being always remains to be an issue. In such an ontological determination, it implies that Dasein is always mine. Dasein expresses its mineness ontically as an “I”. However, Heidegger thinks that the linkage between the “I” and Dasein’s mineness has to be determined ontologically. Just because the assertion “I am this Dasein” seems to be “closest” and inconspicuous, the ontological structure of Dasein’s Being-a-Self is overlooked. Moreover, the existential characteristic of Dasein’s mineness is being missed out. Heidegger regards the ontically closest “I” the reason that makes Dasein ontologically “farthest” to itself. In §5, Heidegger states that:

Ontically, of course, Dasein is not only close to us—even that which is closest [*das nächste*]: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest (BT 36).

Each of us ourselves, I myself, is the who of one’s own Dasein; I myself am this Dasein. That is the “closest” answering to the question that one does not doubt. However, the word “closest” [*das nächste*] is put into quotation marks to express Heidegger’s doubt on its given obviousness.

“Ontical” [*Ontisch*] and “ontological” [*ontologisch*] in the Heideggerian language mean explicitly different. It is outlined in BT 31 that “ontological” level of explication refers to a focus on Being whereas “ontical” level of analysis refers to the entities in question and the facts about them. In most occasions, Heidegger

refers ontical inquiry to positive science—the study of entities that Being is either presumed as a thing or simply ignored. Following this terminological understanding, to say that Dasein is ontically closest to itself but ontologically farthest implies that the ontical whoness of Dasein is under question and requires an ontological affirmation. The ontical understanding of “I” does not reveal the primordial phenomenon of Dasein—its Being. In the Heideggerian phenomenological description, Dasein’s ontological farness itself can be expressed as “Dasein’s own whoness is concealed or covered up by the answer: ‘I am it.’” Heidegger thinks that until the Dasein’s Being is clarified, Dasein is never really “close” to itself.

Dasein’s genuine closeness to itself must be related to the unconcealment of its Being. In “The Ends of Man,” Derrida points out that the analogy of proximity and distance appears again in *Letter on Humanism* in regards to Dasein’s proximity to (the truth of) Being in terms of its existence and it is a clearing of Being (see BW 233-234). Derrida explains further that Dasein is the “*Da* of *sein*”—the presence of Being.<sup>2</sup> In *Being and Time*, Heidegger thinks that only when Dasein’s Being is fully revealed in the ontological inquiry, the understanding of Dasein can be considered genuine. Heidegger says in the *Letter on Humanism* that humanism has not given Dasein its proper prestige in regards to

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<sup>2</sup> In *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger writes, “Being is farther than all beings and is yet nearer to man than every being, be it a rock ... be it an angel or God. Being is the nearest. Yet the near remains farthest from man. Man at first clings always and only to beings. But when thinking represents beings as beings it no doubt relates to Being” (BW 234).

See Jacques Derrida, “Ends of Man,” *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, p.126-128.



its proximity to Being. We see that the genuine proximity, in Heidegger's mind, is according to an ontological clearance of Dasein's own Being. Thus, an ontical certainty that is formed by the common usage of Dasein's self-proclamation to be "I am" is not a real closeness.<sup>3</sup>

By proclaiming "I am this Dasein", Dasein as an "I" is immediately given; it is so obvious. This ontical understanding also presumes that this "I" as a subject is to be explicated for an answering to the who-question. However, from the phenomenological point of view, the immediate ontical givenness and obviousness of the I as a subject (the entity that I myself am) are put into question. Heidegger questions that whether what is presumed to be given and unmistakably described can do justice to the stock of phenomena belonging to the everyday Dasein (see BT 150). The mere ontical content of the assertion that "I am this Dasein" does only show that Dasein is an entity but does not explicate its Being. According to the principle of Heideggerian phenomenology, "To the things themselves", an interpretation of the I demands a full explication of its Being. Heidegger states:

If, in arriving at ontico-ontological assertions, one is to exhibit the

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<sup>3</sup> Von Herrmann points out that Dasein finds itself closest, as its immediate neighbor, only if it compares its self with the external others. Then Dasein's self is taken as an object. Furthermore, although the self as object is closest to the self as subject, there is always an un-surpassed distance between them. It makes them "neighbors" to one another but never a whole. Thus, the "closeness" always implies a distance which is created by the theoretical opposition of subject and object.

See W.F. Von Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins: Eine Erläuterung von "Sein und Zeit", Band 1 Einleitung die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987, pp.154-158.

phenomena in terms of the kind of Being which the entities themselves possesses, and if this way of exhibiting them is to retain its priority over even the most usual and obvious of answers and over whatever ways of formulating problems may have been derived from those answers, then the phenomenological interpretation of Dasein must be defended against a perversion of our problematic when we come to the question we are about to formulate (BT 151).

The phenomenological interpretation of Dasein does not allow the ontical obviousness to override the phenomena of Dasein itself. Heidegger does not consider the "I" the subject. And the phenomenon of Dasein's I-saying remains the problematic of *Being and Time*. Heidegger stresses, "the word 'I' is to be understood only in the sense of a non-committal *formal indicator*" (BT 151-2). This approach to the phenomenon goes beyond the traditional ontical understanding of the I as a subject, soul or spirit. To a large extent, Heidegger attributes Husserl for his suspending the ontical obviousness of the "I" to study its structure of givenness and that Husserl arrives at an understanding that the form of "giving" of the "I" is a mere, formal, reflective awareness. He also points out that this understanding of the giving of the "I" even "affords access to a phenomenological problematic in its own right, which has in principle the signification of providing a framework as a 'formal phenomenology of consciousness'" (BT 151). However, "the mere, formal, reflective awareness of the 'I'" (BT 151) in Husserl's studies does not explicate the phenomenal content



of Dasein's I-saying to its fullest.<sup>4</sup> Heidegger demands a concrete explication of this formal I in Dasein's everyday I-saying.

Therefore, the seemingly closest and obvious "I" is suspended and the priority of interpretation is given to the everyday "I". By such a displacement, the phenomenal content of Dasein's undifferentiated everyday I-saying becomes the issue. The subject to be explicated is in fact not an "I" but the I-saying of Dasein. Hence, Heidegger writes:

It may well be that it is always ontically correct to say of this entity that "I" am it. Yet the ontological analytic which makes use of such assertions must make certain reservations about them in principle (BT

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<sup>4</sup> For a detail discussion of the relatedness of Heidegger and Husserl in regard to their approaches to the question of I, see Michael Theunissen, *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber*, trans. Christopher Macann, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1986, Chapter 5.

Theunissen points out that Husserl's transcendental *ego* does not escape the Heideggerian objection of taking the I as presence-at-hand—the transcendental *ego* is the "I of intentionality". Yet, Heidegger recognizes that the transcendental concept of the *ego* presumes the phenomenon of world. In Heidegger's view, the phenomenon I (saying-I) is constituted by the mode of Being of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. Together with the world, my own Dasein projects itself as an I. The projecting self is regarded the original phenomenal basis of the Being of the "I". Considering the "I" as formal awareness shows that Husserl has the insight of the worldliness of the *ego* (or Dasein) and this is deemed to be an access to the genuine phenomenon of Dasein. Theunissen points out that Heidegger does not find the answer to the question of who of Dasein as a formal statement that Dasein "is an I" satisfying. Heidegger thinks that if the transcendental phenomenology predelineates the formal framework of the genuine phenomenon I, it must be the task of the Dasein analytic to fill out this framework concretely. Theunissen concludes, "the relation of the truly phenomenological phenomenology of Husserl to fundamental ontology is that of an empty indication to its concreteness" (73).

Accordingly, Heidegger only takes the word “I” in the sense of a non-committal formal indicator. That, it indicates something which may perhaps reveal itself as its “opposite” (the not-I or the “They” [*das Man*]) in some particular phenomenal context of Being. In saying “I”, the word “I” only formally indicates that Dasein is itself. In terms of *Being and Time*, it is the phenomenon of Dasein’s mineness [*Jemeinigkeit*]. The who-question therefore aims specifically at an explication of the Being of Dasein regarding its Being-mine. Hence, the question of who of Dasein no longer belongs to one of the traditional metaphysical who-question that searches for the “I-thing”.

Since the answering of Dasein’s everyday whoness is indeed an interpretation of its Being-a-Self instead of a I-thing. This mode of Being-a-Self is to be referred back to the everyday context that Dasein is its self when it takes a bus, uses a hammer and writes on a paper. Rather, the task is to explicate the mode of Being that Dasein is dealing with its everyday life. This everydayness is an existential description of how Dasein exists in the world as a Being-in-the-world. Hence, we shall go into the question of the “world” of everydayness in order to present the mode of Being of Dasein’s Being-a-Self.

### ***B. The structure of this Thesis***

This thesis aims at an exposition of Heidegger’s questioning of this who-question. We shall see that Heidegger’s questioning comes to be a circle: it is an interpretation of the answer “I am this Dasein”. Heidegger starts with the insight of the Cartesian “*cogito sum*” that is also the hallmark of Modern thinking.



However, Heidegger thinks that Descartes' effort of investigation of the *cogito* does not lead him to discover the full meaning of the ontological insight of the Being of the *ego*. Afterwards, he maintains that Kant has correctly analyzed the phenomenal content of I-saying so as to discover a non-substantial "I think". However, Kant is criticized to have taken the "I think" as another kind of "subject"—*hypokeimenon* again. Heidegger's most severe objection toward Kant and Descartes remains on their taking Dasein or the ego as a present-at-hand [*Vorhanden*]. His criticism is undertaken on two understandings of the ontological structure of Dasein: (1) The Dasein is ontologically distinct from other entities because it has a peculiar relationship of its own Being—understanding of Being [*Seinsverständnis*]; (2) Dasein is a Being-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-sein*]. The phenomenon of world is the structure of existence of Dasein. Heidegger sees that the world is a totality of relation in which Dasein is involved with all things within the world. Entities are, notwithstanding Dasein is or is absent.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the world is discussed as something structural of Dasein's existence instead of an external object.

Heidegger's discontent with Descartes and Kant rests on their neglect of the phenomenon of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world. As far as Dasein is a Being-in-the-world, the phenomenal content of its I-saying is to be re-appropriated. Whenever Dasein says "I think", it has to be understood as an "I think something"; Saying "I" expresses Dasein as a "I-am-in-the-world." Heidegger says:

If, in the ontology of Dasein, we "take our departure" from a worldless

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<sup>5</sup> MFL §11.

“I” in order to provide this “I” with an Object and an ontologically baseless relation to that Object, then we have “presupposed” not too much, but *too little* (BT 363).

Hence, the question remains to be: “what is the phenomenal content of the ‘I-am-in-the-world’?” In the existential analytic, Dasein’s “I” in its everydayness is revealed as a “They” [*das Man*].<sup>6</sup> Does Heidegger dismiss our everyday most obvious answering to the question? If I am the “They”, how do I perceive this astonishing answer? However, at the end of the thesis, we shall see that Heidegger explains that the mode of Being of the “They”, Dasein’s “inauthenticity” [*Uneigentlichkeit*], belongs in fact to Dasein’s own mineness. By so doing, he returns the “I am” to Dasein; he also settles that Dasein, as a Being-in-the-world, its Being-lost in the “They” is indeed its own facticity. He says:

This undifferentiated character of Dasein’s everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic to this entity. Out of this kind of Being—and back into it again—is all existing, such as it is (BT 69).

Henceforth, our exposition of Heidegger’s questioning does not seek for a new answer to the who-question but an understanding of the meaning of Heidegger’s phenomenological elucidation of the answer.

However, since the question of Being is the core question of *Being and Time*, how do we understand the question of “who” of Dasein in the context of

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<sup>6</sup> Heidegger writes, “*proximally*, it is not ‘I’, in the sense of my own Self, that ‘am’, but rather the Others, whose is that of the ‘They’. In terms of the ‘They’ and as the ‘They’, I am ‘given’ proximally to ‘myself’” (BT 167).



the Being-question? This is the task of chapter I to explain how the question of the “who” is incorporated in the question of Being, and how this linkage disassociates Heidegger’s questioning from the traditional anthropology. Afterwards, we shall establish that the aim of the question of the “who” of Dasein is posed in a specific sense of “whoness” (BP 120). It does not ask about a “what”, or “I”, or “subject” but the phenomenal content of I-saying.

Chapter II will focus on Heidegger’s historical approach to the answer of the who-question, i.e., the “I am”. Heidegger thinks that Descartes and Kant are two most important philosophers: Descartes discovers the “*sum*” as the foundation of the Modern philosophy; whereas Kant corrects the direction of research on the “I” from a “*res cogitans*” to an “I think”. However, Heidegger maintains that both Descartes and Kant have not yet answered this question of Being of the I. And that not only the answer is missing, but the question itself is also hardly found. The most important mistake, Heidegger thinks, is the lack of understanding of Dasein’s ontological difference. Both Descartes and Kant are criticized for taking Dasein as a present-at-hand. Heidegger regards the effort of Kant and Descartes to establish a proof of existence of the external world insufficient. It is not due to the inadequacy of the proofs, but the wrong ontological presumption of Dasein. However, the most important conclusion of his confrontation of Kant and Descartes is that “in saying ‘I’, I have in view the entity which in each case I am as an ‘I-am-in-the-world’” (BT 368).

Then, the phenomenon of I-saying is determined as more fundamental to the phenomenon of world. What is the meaning of the world? And what does the phenomenon of Dasein as an “I-am-in-the-world” mean? We shall see that Heidegger does not start from a theoretical point of view. Rather, he begins at the

level of *praxis*, Dasein's everydayness. He thinks that it is the primary way that the phenomenon of Dasein shows itself without any theoretical obstruction. From Dasein's everydayness, its existential structures is determined as Being-in in the world. That the world is the "wherein" [*Worin*] Dasein finds itself and concerns itself with the involvement. Furthermore, the world is not a "private" world of Dasein. It is rather a public world, the "with-world" [*Mitwelt*]. In the publicness of the with-world, Dasein is not only a Being-with-one-another, it is also "lost". It is because the self-understanding of Dasein is actually absorbed in the way that the Others talk in the idle talk. Thus, the idle talk is the most powerful force to "take away" Dasein's own Being (BT 164).

Heidegger points out that the everyday Dasein, who says "I", is not its authentic Self. Instead, it is the "They" [*das Man*]. The term "*das Man*" refers to a "one", or "anyone"; it is an indefinite impersonal pronoun. Heidegger says, it is "nobody" (166 [128]). Thus, we can understand why Heidegger states in §5 that the ontically closest "I am" is ontologically farthest. However, Heidegger also noted in §25 that in fact the "I am" is ontically unclear.

In the concluding chapter, we need to re-establish a path of thinking of Heidegger. Starting from the everydayness, and arrives at the "They", does Heidegger aim at providing a new answer to the question of "who" of Dasein? We shall explain what he means by everydayness and inauthenticity. The everyday way of answering the question of "who", as well as the everyday mode of Being of Dasein is in fact an existential determination of Dasein itself. To say that Dasein is "*not*" its own self in the everydayness does not refute the answer "I am". If the everyday undifferentiated mode of Being is existentially determined, and it will turn out to be a genuine way of expressing Dasein's existence and

mineness, the answer will remain valid. In the final analysis, there is not alternative answer but the answer is clarified in an ontologico-phenomenological manner.



# Chapter I

## The Question of “Who” and the Question of Being

*Clearing the way toward an non-Anthropological access to Dasein*

### A. Introduction

This chapter aims at settling the direction of research of Dasein’s whoness in the context of Heidegger’s question of Being in *Being and Time*. We shall show that the who-question of Dasein is in fact the guiding question to the Dasein analytic and it is also the access to the question of Being. In the Heideggerian way of posing the question of Being, the questioning itself is indeed already pointing to the way of answering. Of course, it is well known that the question has not been fully answered in *Being and Time*. However, in the whole enterprise of Heidegger’s thinking, the question always remains as the guiding thread of his thought. As Otto Pöggeler reported that Heidegger describes his thinking as a traveling along the way, “To head towards a single star”.<sup>7</sup> Thus, if we expect a full answer, we seem to be unaware of the thinker’s style. However, in this thesis, we shall not go into the detail of the whole idea of the question of Being. Instead, we shall only elaborate the formulation of this question in *Being and Time*.

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<sup>7</sup> Otto Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger’s path of thinking*, p.2.



Moreover, our aim is to show how the question of “who” of Dasein is an essential starting point of the question of Being.

In the untitled Preface of *Being and Time*, Heidegger quotes Plato’s *Sophist* 244a to express the obscurity of the question of Being:

For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression “*being*”. We, however, who use to think we understood it, have now become perplexed”. He thinks that “not only that the question of Being lacks an *answer*, but that the question itself is obscure and without direction (BT 24).

In *Being and Time*, explicitly “formulating” the question is the issue. The Dasein analytic is considered as an essential moment to the formulation of the question of Being. In the following discussion, we shall see that questioning the question of Being is indeed intrinsic to Dasein’s pre-ontological understanding of Being [*vorontologische Seinsverständnis*]*—*it is a radicalize expression of Dasein’s characteristic (BT 35). He said, “The very asking of this question is an entity’s mode of Being; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about—namely, Being” (BT 27). It means that on the one hand, the questioning Being must presume an understanding of Being. On the other hand, posing the question of Being is an essential characteristic of Dasein. Namely, the question of Being is nothing accidental but the questioning itself is a constitutive characteristic of Dasein. As so formulated, a clarification of Dasein’s Being is considered essential as an access to the question of Being.

The who-question is regarded as the access to an essential character of Dasein (BT 71). It is, moreover, the access to the question of Being. Heidegger says in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, “the Dasein is not constituted by whatness but—if we may coin the expression—by *whones*” (BP 120). In the traditional sense, the who-question is indeed a question of the person, the subject, the soul, or the I. If we raise the question of Dasein as an entity, we can only arrive at an answer in terms of the whatness of the entity but not the whoness of Dasein. Person, soul, subject and the like are studied in the tradition as “present-at-hand”. However, present-at-hand is not the proper mode of Being of Dasein but the Being of Dasein is called “existence” [*Existenz*] and mineness [*Jemeinigkeit*]. Establishing the contrast of Dasein against the present-at-hand is a main task in *Being and Time*. In Heidegger’s criticism on the tradition of anthropology, the main attack remains to be the indifference to Dasein’s ontological difference from the present-at-hand.

The answer to the who-question does not give a thing but an I, you, and we (BP 120). Here the “I” that is given from the answering of the question has a specific place in the Dasein analytic. The “I” is not treated as a thing present-at-hand but approached with regards to the mineness of Dasein. This “I” is specifically considered in the phenomenon of Dasein’s I-saying. By so doing, the Heideggerian questioning of Dasein’s whoness is a phenomenological explication of Dasein’s I-saying. The problematic is not the I-thing itself, or the semantic meaning of the word “I”. Rather, the problem remains to be the phenomenon of Dasein’s self-expressing as a whole. In this sense, saying “I” implies Dasein’s Being-an-I as its way of Being. Thus, the investigation of the “who” of Dasein is worked out in a phenomenological interpretation of Dasein’s “Being-an-I”.



## **B. The Question of Being and Dasein's Understanding of Being**

Restating the question of Being is the cardinal theme of *Being and Time*. In the opening section, Heidegger states his discontent to the traditional ontology. He summarizes the history of ontology in three presuppositions that Being is universal, indefinable and self-evident (see BT 22-23). By so presuming, the meaning of Being is left in darkness and deemed unintelligible. Heidegger thinks that it is neither the answer of meaning of Being is lacking nor a thematic questioning of Being is held in a proper direction. For him, Plato's question of meaning of Being is still the most fundamental one (BT 31). Heidegger thinks that the question of Being is to be re-appropriated in a proper way by setting up a new direction of inquiry. In *Being and Time*, he points out that Being is not an entity and that the possibility for treated as an entity and that the questioning itself is nothing other than a radicalization of the tendency-of-Being of Dasein in its pre-ontological understanding of Being (BT 35). In the following discussion we shall discuss the significance of the Heideggerian formulation of the question of Being in a circular way which presupposes Dasein's understanding of Being.

### **1. The clarification of the structure of the Question**

In §2 of *Being and Time* the question of Being is posed. This question has three structural items: (1) Being is that which is asked about [*Gefragte*]. (2) The entity that is being interrogated [*Befragte*] is Dasein because of its onto-ontological priority of having the understanding of Being. (3) That which is to be



found out by the asking [*Erfragte*] is the meaning of Being. “What is the meaning of Being?” “We do not know what Being means” (BT 27), says Heidegger. However, there is a hint from the *Gefragte*: “Being is not an entity”, “it means the Being of entities”. He adds, “Being lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is” (BT 26), As that which is asked about, Being has to be conceived in a way of its own, essentially contrasting with the concepts in which entities acquire their determinate signification. Hence, the question of Being is distinct from all other questions of entities.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Where does the idea that “Being is not an entity” come from, if the meaning of Being is still unknown? Is it conceptual presupposition of the inquiry? In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger says, “The distinction of Being and being (entity) is *pre-ontologically* there, without an explicit concept of Being, *latent in the Dasein’s existence*” (BP 319, Heidegger’s italic). There is disclosure of Being itself in Dasein’s understanding of Being even if it discloses only pre-ontologically. Such a disclosure is the constitution of Dasein’s existence as long as Dasein exists (see BT §4). The ontological distinction is not an conceptual “assertion” but a phenomenological description on the Being of Dasein. Jean-Luc Marion argues that ontological Difference has come to the forth even in *Being and Time*, although the term itself does not appear. He thinks that if it is not the case, Heidegger’s “Being is not an entity” in *Being and Time* would not have been raised.

From the sentences about the distinction of Being and entity quoted above, one might try to compare it with the famous “ontological Difference” [*ontologische Differenz*]. In fact, the term “ontological Difference” does not appear in *Being and Time*. But in the same year that *Being and Time* is published, Heidegger introduces “ontological difference” [*ontologische Unterscheid*] of Being and entities in the 1927 Marburg Lecture, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. It is described as the mode of existence of Dasein. It must be noted that the latent and implicit ontological difference [*Unterscheid*] in BP 319 has to be distinguished from his “ontological Difference” [*Differenz*] latter in Heidegger’s “thinking of Being” after “the Turn”. Obviously, the former has not been treated as a thematic problem. We shall not discuss the problem of continuity of Heidegger’s thought in this thesis. Yet, I do believe that the insightful sentence “Being is not an entity” deserves a more

Although Being cannot be treated as an entity, it is possible to inquire about Being as the Being of an entity. The inquiry then needs to question about the Being of an entity. Which entity is the meaning of Being is to be discerned? Heidegger says,

If the question about Being is to be explicitly formulated and carried through in such a manner as to be completely transparent to itself, then any treatment of it in line with the elucidation we have given requires us to explain how Being is to be looked at, how its meaning is to be understood and conceptually grasped; ... Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it—all these ways of behaving are constitutive for our inquiry, and therefore are modes of Being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves. Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his own Being (BT 26-7).

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sophisticated illustration than that in the *Being and Time* and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. In *Identity and Difference*, Heidegger elaborates the unexplained sentence of *Being and Time*: the problem of clarifying the Difference [*Differenz*] between “Being” and entity (being) needs a “stepping back” [*Schrittzurück*] to what is unthought. The “step back” is the move of thinking toward the “clearing” [*Lichtung*] of Being through the “Difference” and the “between” among Being and beings. Difference [*Differenz*] then has nothing to do with distinction or difference [*Unterscheid*] which belongs to the representative understanding [*Verstand*] (see *Identity and Difference*: 51-65).

See Jean-Luc Marion, *Reduction and Givenness*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998, Chapter 4 and Jacques Derrida, “Differance”, *Margins of Philosophy*, Alan Bass Trans., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp.21-27.



Among other entities, Dasein the inquirer has a distinctive relationship to the question that makes it the *Befragte*. In addition to the structural determination that Dasein is the entity that is to be interrogated, Heidegger also points out that the ontological interrelation between Dasein and the question of Being. Dasein's peculiar relationship with the question of Being is revealed in its having an understanding of Being [*Seinsverständnis*]. That is, whenever Dasein is questioning the question of Being of an entity, an understanding of Being is presupposed. Since an explicit explication of the question of Being and the Being of an entity demands a disclosure of Dasein's understanding of Being, Dasein is the most suitable entity to be the *Befragte* of the question. Therefore, the question of Being is directed to a question of the Being of Dasein. So, Being as the *Gefragte* is rendered provisionally in the Being of Dasein.

Dasein's having the understanding of Being also determines the hermeneutical structure of inquiry: "*Inquiry, as a kind of seeking, must be guided beforehand by what is sought*" (BT 25). That is to say, the questioning of the meaning of Being is essentially guided by Dasein's understanding of Being. Heidegger explains that we always conduct our activities in an understanding of Being and that the questioning of meaning of Being is an activity of Dasein (see BT 25). That "out of this understanding of Being arise both the explicit question of the meaning of Being and the tendency that leads us towards its conception" (ibid.). Dasein does not need a clear conception of "Being" in order to pose the question such as "what 'is' the meaning of Being?" or to answer that "Being 'is' ...".



However, this understanding of Being is indefinite and vague. Heidegger sees that a clarification of this vague, undifferentiated yet self-evident<sup>9</sup> understanding of Being is inevitable if the question of meaning of Being is to be worked out. The term “understanding of Being” is in need to be explained in order to carry on the discussion. However, a full explication of the term is impossible at the present stage of our discussion because this is the question that the entire published *Being and Time* is trying to clarify. For the moment, we shall only explain it in a preliminary way. “Understanding of Being” in German is formulated in one word, “*Seinsverständnis*”, it has to be understood as a unified whole. It is a “relationship-of-Being” [*Seinsverhältnis*]; it means that it is not an “understanding” acquired by intellectual reflection. In the Heideggerian language, “understanding” always means “disclosure”, or “disclosedness”. That is a phenomenological state of Being that Dasein is encountering to the self-manifestation of something. In this sense, understanding of Being refers to the disclosedness of Being. Now the question of Being refers to the Being of Dasein, as long as it is, it is disclosed to Being. Understanding of Being is there as long as Dasein exists. Thus, the “understanding of Being is a relationship-to-Being” means that Dasein is disclosed to its Being in its Being. It is not a relationship “with” Being because this relationship is constitutive to Dasein’s existence. Accordingly, understanding of Being is a “definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being” (BT 32), its adequate explication then amount to a complete analytic of the Being of Dasein. Regarding to the structural presupposition of understanding

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<sup>9</sup> Heidegger says, “*But this vague average understanding of Being is still a fact [Faktum]*” (Heidegger’s italic, BT 25).

of Being, the question of Being therefore demands the analytic of Dasein's Being.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The circularity of the question

We then come to the Heideggerian "circle" because the Being-question is interrogated in a circular way: The question of Being "presupposes" the understanding of Being. Heidegger emphasizes that this is not a circular reasoning, since deduction is not involved. Furthermore, he says, "it is quite impossible for there to be any 'circular argument' in formulating the question of Being; for in answering this question, the issue is not one of grounding something by such a derivation; it is rather one of laying bare the grounds for it by exhibiting them" (BT 28). In his view, all ontology presupposes an understanding of Being in a particular disclosive character of the question itself<sup>11</sup> as we have demonstrated above. Heidegger writes,

One can determine the nature of entities in their Being without necessarily having the explicit concept of the meaning of Being at one's disposal. Otherwise there could have been no ontological knowledge

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<sup>10</sup> The discovery of "understanding of Being" is indeed a very important theoretical move that Heidegger has made to establish his own method of phenomenology. This "presupposition" signifies his divergence from the Husserlian phenomenology. While Husserl tries to establish a rigorous presuppositionless science based on the principle of evidence, Heidegger develops his hermeneutic of Being. For a detail discussion on this problem, see F. W. von Herrmann, *Der Begriff der Phänomenologie bei Heidegger und Husserl*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1981 and 張燦輝, 《海德格與胡塞爾現象學》, 臺北市: 東大發行, 1996, 〈附錄〉.

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger's *Plato's Sophist* p. 310.



heretofore. One would hardly deny that factually there has been such knowledge. Of course "Being" has been presupposed in all ontology up till now, but not as a *concept* at one's disposal. (BT 27).

The Being-question discloses itself in the understanding of Being. That is also the determination of the Being of Dasein. Thus, we see that the question and the answering itself are presupposed all at once. This disclosive character of the question of Being itself is also based on the Being of Dasein. The Being of Dasein has a character that Being is always "an issue" for Dasein (see BT §4 and §9). In this sense, the "circle" of the question is an ontological determination and the Heidegger's way of working out the question is in "an existential circular" way (BT 362). Caputo points out that *Being and Time* is indeed undertaken in a "strategic circle". The treatise begins with its outcome. Caputo calls this circular strategy the "Radical Hermeneutics". He says:

Here there is no formal, deductive movement from premise to conclusion but a regressive, hermeneutic movement bent on explication, *aus-legen*, on unpacking the implicit components of an everyday functioning preunderstanding. The point is to raise a vague understanding to the level of an explicit concept, to move along a line from implicit to explicit.<sup>12</sup>

Circularity of the question of Being itself also implies the circularity of the Being of Dasein. That is, since that which is asked is the Being of Dasein, Being

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<sup>12</sup> J. D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, trans. David Pettigrew and Gregory Recco, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1998, pp. 67-8.



is somehow understood as long as Dasein is, i.e., in its existence. Heidegger says, "Every ontologically explicit question about Dasein's Being has had the way already prepared for it by the kind of Being which Dasein has" (BT 360). Therefore, the question of Being implies both Being and Dasein's understanding of Being. Dasein is essentially an entity that understands and in fact already understood itself, about its own Being (see BT 361). Thus, if the Being of Dasein is already presumed, posing the question of Being of Dasein is, again, a circle.

The presupposition of understanding of Being is in fact an indication of the pre-understanding, or pre-theoretical understanding. As we have discussed in the last section, it is a *fact* but is still vague. It is vague in the sense that a determined structure of understanding is still missing. But if what is being asked is Being, where can we go for a "deeper" understanding than the understanding of Being? Heidegger says, "and if we are inquiring about the meaning of Being, our investigation does not then become a 'deep' one [*tiensinnig*], nor does it puzzle out what stands behind Being" (BT 193).

Hence, the "circle" is in fact not an obstacle but a necessary point of departure for the Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology. Having an understanding is not the end of the question, but it is the phenomenal content that is to be explicated further. Thus, the existential analytic of Dasein is indeed the task of working out the understanding of Being in a strict phenomenological way.

To conclude, in §2, Heidegger elaborates the question of Being in which he sees the *Befragte* is the essential clue to the answer of the question. The questioning of the question itself presupposes Dasein's understanding of Being. Structurally speaking, the question is guided by the pre-ontological understanding

of Being. Such an understanding of Being is not yet a conceptual grasp of "Being". Rather, it refers only to the ontological constitution of Dasein the inquirer so that the question can be asked in one way or another. We have shown in the above discussion that Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of Being is the issue for the preparation of formulating the question of Being.

### ***C. Dasein's understanding of Being as its essential characteristic***

#### **1. The preliminary indication of the meaning of Dasein**

According to the formulation of the question of Being, the Being of Dasein has to be revealed properly. How does Heidegger understand the meaning of Being of Dasein? In §4, Heidegger has given a formal indication of Dasein that understanding of Being is nothing other than the ontological characteristic [*Seinsbestimmtheit*] of Dasein. The famous paragraph of §4 says,

[Dasein] is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it. But in that case, this is a constitutive state of Dasein's Being, and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being—a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does it so explicitly. It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being, this Being is disclosed to it. *Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being* (Heidegger's italic) (BT 32).



Dasein is formally indicated as an entity that has a special relationship of Being [*Seinsverhältnis*]. Dasein does not acquire such a relation in the way that it relates itself with another entity. Since Being is the Being of Dasein, Dasein has this relationship as long as it is. This “having” is indeed pre-ontologically regulated in the Being of Dasein. The kind of Being of Dasein is peculiarly designed as self-understanding, self-disclosing. And most essentially, disclosing and understanding its own Being is the ultimate issue of its own Being; Being remains always the issue. In German, Dasein is “*in seinem Sein um sein Sein geht*” [SZ 12], in other words, Dasein is for the sake of its Being; Dasein discloses and understands its own Being for the sake of its Being—not its self’s, but its Being’s. In this sense, Dasein is always “ontological”. Heidegger adds that Dasein’s Being-ontological is not yet tantamount to its always engaging in a thematic inquiry on Being; this way of Being-ontological is indeed a “pre-ontological” state of Being that the question of Being is not yet raised.

Moreover, Dasein’s being “ontological” presumes that it has an understanding of Being. Understanding of Being is the constitution of Dasein’s Being-ontological. That is to say, understanding of Being and Dasein’s Being-ontological is structurally intrinsic. Dasein’s Being is a determinate end of Dasein itself, as long as Dasein is, it discloses its own Being. In this sense, understanding of Being is always happening as long as Dasein exists. Thus, Heidegger does not talk about a static knowledge, or something innate to the intellect of Dasein. Understanding of Being is always a structurally on-going event that appropriates Dasein’s own Being. The way of Being of Dasein, as determined so, is called “existence” [*Existence*] and the totality of Dasein’s Being is called “care” [*Sorge*].



As Dasein exists, its Being is disclosed to itself as existence. Since Being of Dasein is not external to it but is Dasein's very own constitution, Dasein's care for its own Being is not an going out for ..., but a self-disclosure and self-understanding. Heidegger also mentions that only on the basis of care, can Dasein be itself authentically. And even in its inauthentic mode of Being, care also lies at bottom to make understanding of Dasein's everyday potentiality-for-Being [*Seinsmöglichkeit*] (see BT 372 and 370).

Sofaras Dasein has the characteristic of understanding of Being and its Being always remains the issue, it is distinguished from other entities. Not only so, Heidegger in *Being and Time* thinks that Dasein can provide the *ontico-ontological condition* for the possibility of ontologies (BT 34).

To outline the characteristic of Dasein, Heidegger makes use of two "formal indications" to further explicate the above description of the ontological characteristic of Dasein: "existence" [*Existenz*] and "mineness" [*Jemeinigkeit*]. Heidegger's "formally indicative method" is grounded in his early thinking of phenomenology.<sup>13</sup> It is a pure "letting something be seen" or "pointing something out" in a pre-theoretical manner. In brief, it is a primary pointing-out of the phenomenon. With this "pointing-out" character, the formal indication does not "express" its whole phenomenal content at once. Heidegger says, "the formal is a content in such a manner that the indication points into a direction, sketches out

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<sup>13</sup> See John Van Buren, "The Ethics of *Formale Anzeige* in Heidegger," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarter*, 69 (2) Spring 1995, pp.157-170 and Theodore Kisiel, "The Genetic Difference in Reading *Being and Time*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarter*, 69 (2) Spring 1995, pp. 171-187.

the way in advance.”<sup>14</sup> These indications explain the formal meaning of Dasein. They lay down the guiding direction to the existential constitution of Dasein so that the analytic can have a fixed subject.

#### *a. Existence*

The term “existence” [*Existenz*] is exclusively reserves for the kind of entity called Dasein. It denotes that Dasein is not a present-at-hand [*Vorhanden*]. It is stated in §9, “the ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its ‘existence’” (BT 67). “*Existentia*” in the scholastic terms means “actuality” [*Wirklichkeit*]: the “thing’s being put out or placed outside the causes [*Ursachen*] which actualize it outside of nothing” (*rei extra causa et nihilum sistentia*) (BP 87). In traditional Metaphysics, “*existentia*” of Dasein, of a plant, of a stone in question is not differentiated; all entities are considered as present-at-hand [*Vorhanden*]. But the Heideggerian “existence” does not concern the actuality of Dasein. Rather, it only indicates the distinct characteristic of Dasein that it has a peculiar relationship to Being—self-relating and self-understanding. In this relationship to Being, Dasein has its possibilities to comport itself. It also has the possibilities to decide whether to “to be itself or not itself” (BT 33).

When Heidegger states that The “essence” of Dasein lies in its existence, Dasein’s “essence” does not refer to its property. The Heideggerian meaning of “essence” [*Wesen*] is different from the traditional scholastic “*essentia*”. In the traditional “*essentia*”, entity is interrogated according to its “what-ness”, as “thing” that is present-at-hand. That “what” under the discussion of “*essentia*” does not have the Dasein’s kind of Being. With the word “essence” put in a

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted from Van Buren, “The Ethics of *Formale Anzeige* in Heidegger”, p.165.



quotation mark in *Being and Time*, Heidegger indicates that the “essence” of Dasein lies in its distinctive way of Being—no property but its existence.<sup>15</sup>

Existence signifies Dasein’s ontological difference from other entities which Being cannot be an issue for them. For Dasein, Being is the issue and as such, Being is understood in the primordial phenomenon of Dasein. Existence is the way of Being of Dasein in which Dasein encounters the world and the entities within it. When Dasein is dealing and engaging with any kinds of entities, it may consider itself having the same kind of Being as they are. Indeed, in its everyday living (in Heidegger’s terms, we shall read, “on the existentiell level”) Dasein comports itself with the world, it can either be itself (authentically) or not itself (inauthentically). In this everyday way of living, Dasein has an understanding of itself in its Being. As simple as casually calling itself “I” or by name, it implies

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<sup>15</sup> According to Alfons Grieder, the meaning of “essence” in *Being and Time* is not well elaborated. On the one hand, Heidegger sees that the traditional “*essentia*” is questionable. On the other hand he makes frequent use of “*Wesen*” in the notion of “*Vorgriff*”, i.e. a preliminary grasp of something still in need of an ontological-phenomenological clarification on the basis of the first part of *Being and Time*. Although Dasein’s essence is determined as existence and Heidegger concerns himself with the analytic of what he took to be essential structures of Dasein, the term “*Wesen*” remains a largely indeterminate notion. (see “*What did Heidegger mean by ‘Essence’?*” Alfons Grieder, pp. 65, 80-82). To a large extent, I agree with Grieder. Even though the “later” Heidegger has studied and lectured heavily on the idea of “essence”, it obviously is different from the context of the “fundamental ontology” of *Being and Time*. Because our focus is in *Being and Time* and in Heidegger’s analytic on the question of “who” of Dasein, we shall not go into detail of the genealogy of this word. See Grieder, Alfons, “What did Heidegger mean by ‘Essence’?” in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol.19, No.1, January 1988, 64-89.



Dasein's Being-in-the-world and at the same time, it has an understanding of Being. This kind of self-understanding is unique in Dasein.

### **b. Mineness**

The second characteristic of Dasein is "mineness" [*Jemeinigkeit*]. Mineness is by no means "secondary" but is equi-primordial to existence. We mention earlier that Dasein has a self-understanding. Such a self-understanding will be expressed as an understanding of its own mineness—that this Dasein is in each case mine and no one else. Heidegger states, "that Being which is an issue for this entity in its very Being, is in each case mine [*Das Sein ist es, darum es diessem Seiden in Seinem Sein geht, ist je meines*]" (BT 67). In other words, Dasein is always Being-mine. Raffoul points out that the mineness is a "relationship of Being": "In Being-mine, it is Being which is at issue. Being-mine therefore signifies Being itself, insofar as it is each time at issue in the entity that I am. It is to this extent that the existential analytic was defined on the basis of the project of fundamental ontology."<sup>16</sup>

Raffoul reads that: "It is Being itself that is mine. And not 'I', then. I am only myself through Being."<sup>17</sup> It is also noteworthy that mineness is an expression of understanding of Being, this self-understanding discloses primordially Being, not the "I". Thus, we shall note that Heidegger always describes Dasein as "mine", "one's own", or "itself". It is an important deliberation to show that mineness is "a way of Being of Dasein", its "Being-mine", and "Being-a-self". It is different from the "I" or the Self. "I" or "Self" usually remain to be the

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<sup>16</sup> Heidegger and the Subject, p. 210.

<sup>17</sup> Heidegger and the Subject, p.210

questionable phenomena or the ontical understanding of an substantial entity. Mineness, however, is the ground for Being-I and Being-a-Self, i.e. the Being of this entity. It is not the property but the Being of Dasein's I and self but the ontological constitution.

To conclude, Dasein is designed as a distinctive entity. Its ontological difference lies, on the one hand in its having an pre-ontological understanding of Being; and its always having Being as an issue [*um sein Sein geht*] on the other. This ontological constitution is known as care: the disclosure of its own Being to itself is the ultimate end. In this sense, Dasein is always for the sake of its Being, and always its own potentiality-for-Being. Existence and mineness are the indications of Dasein exclusively. Under all this descriptions of the Being of Dasein, Dasein's understanding of Being is always at issue, it mark the ontological difference of Dasein. In the next section, we shall discuss how Heidegger's understanding of Dasein is very different to the traditional studies of man. In distancing himself from the anthropological, what Heidegger has in view is always whether the Being of man can be adequately questioned or revealed? Is the ontological difference of Dasein properly recognized?

## **2. The analytic of Dasein as distinguished from Anthropology**

Heidegger states, "Ontically, of course, Dasein is not only close to us—even that which is closest: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves" (BT 36). Dasein cannot be a general name for a genus called human beings. Rather, it must be referring to an individual that "I myself am it". However, if the Dasein analytic aims at an "I", it will fall back along the line of the Cartesian *ego*, on the level of the entity



present-at-hand. Now the Dasein analytic aims at explicating an entity that has a relationship to Being, mineness must be rendered in reference to Being of Dasein. In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger states:

If we say “Dasein is in each case essentially mine”, and if our task is to define this characteristic of Dasein ontologically, this does not mean we should investigate the essence of my self, as the factual individual, or of some other given individual. The object of inquiry is of mineness and selfhood as such (MFL 189).

The investigation of mineness as the Being of Dasein cannot be studied as the substantial “self” or “individual”. In Heidegger’s critique, these ways of investigation misplace themselves on the investigation of an subject that lacks the quality of man. In §10, Heidegger says:

If we posit an “I” or subject as that which is proximally given, we shall completely miss the phenomenal content of Dasein. Ontologically, every idea of a “subject” ... still posits the *subjectum* (*hypokeimenon*) along with it, no matter how one’s ontical protestations against the “soul substance” or the “reification of consciousness”. The thinghood itself which such reification implies must have its ontological origin demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we are to understand *positively* when we think of the unreified *Being* of the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person (BT 72).

It is clear from the above quotation that mineness cannot be treated as an subject. Otherwise, it will be reified as a thing. Heidegger thinks that there are two important elements in this traditional anthropology: Man as a *zoon logon echon*,



and as an *ens creatum*. These two sources only indicate that “over and above the attempt to determine the essence of ‘man’ as an entity, the question of Being has remained forgotten, and this Being is rather conceived as something present-at-hand of the other created things” (BT 75). Heidegger criticizes the anthropological orientation arising from the Greek and Christian tradition as an obstacle to the question of Dasein’s Being as follows:<sup>18</sup>

***a. Being can neither be determined by the composition of animal and ratio, nor that of ens finitum and its special relation to God***

Traditional anthropology defines man as the *zôon logon echon*. It means “rational animal”. The “*logos*” is understood to be some kind of “superior endowment” [*höhere Ausstattung*] to the human soul. Likewise, in the definition of man as “a creation in the likeness and image of God”, man is defined as “something that reaches beyond himself” (BT 74). God’s spirit endows this *ens finitum*. Both of these definitions of man define man as a compound of a bodily element and a psychical (spiritual) element. However, it is impossible to determine Being as a collection of parts. Heidegger said, “When however, we come to the question of man’s Being, this is not something we can simply compute [*errechnet*] by adding together those kinds of Being which body, soul, and spirit respectively possess—kinds of Being whose nature has not as yet been determined” (BT 73-74). Heidegger says, “It must face the whole man” (*ibid.*)<sup>19</sup>. The metaphysical inquiries toward the substance of soul, spirit or the like, are not directed toward the question of Being as Being. The Being that belongs to man remains obscure in the terms *rational animale* and *ens finitum*.

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<sup>18</sup> See Heidegger and the Subject, pp.27-32.

### ***b. The indeterminacy of Logos***

The traditional anthropology defines man as “*zôon logon echon*”. Man is interpreted as *animal rationale*, “something living which has reason” (BT 208). According to the analysis in *What is a Thing?*, considering and expressing something as something in Latin is “*reor*” or “*ratio*”. Therefore, *ratio* becomes the translation of *logos*. What is expressed as *ratio*, is understood as assertion or judgement (BT 55-56). *Ratio* is then translated into English “reason” (or “*Vernunft*” in German) and is understood as the guideline for determining something as something.<sup>20</sup> In this manner, *Ratio* is interpreted as a faculty of judgement which is an essential property of man. Heidegger criticizes that this translation overlooks the original meaning of *logos* as “discourse” (see BT 55 and WT 64). Heidegger criticizes that taking *logos* to be *ratio* “is not ‘false,’ but it covers up the phenomenal basis for this definition of ‘Dasein’” (BT 208-9). Tracing the meaning of *logos* back into the Greeks’ usage, Heidegger finds that its original signification is related to “*legein*”, means “discourse”. So, the phenomenal content of man (Dasein) as *zoon logon echon* is shown to be “that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse” (BT 47). The ability to talk is not considered as one capacity among the other. Heidegger sees that discourse is an ontological problem of Dasein.

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<sup>19</sup> See also HCT 154.

<sup>20</sup> See WT 64, “The basic form of thinking, and thus of thought, is the guideline for the determination of the thingness of the thing. The categories determine in general the being of what is...It remains essential that thought as simple assertion, *logos*, *ratio*, is the guideline for the determination of the Being of what is, i.e. for the thingness of thing. The term “Guideline” [*Leitfaden*] means that the modes of asserting direct the view in the determining of the presence [*Anwesenheit*], i.e. the



Heidegger explicates that discourse means *apophainesthai*: so far as a discourse is genuine, it lets the very thing that is talked about be seen both by the speaker and the hearers (BT 56). Because Dasein is considered as a Being-in-the-world, its way of “letting something be seen” is distinct from that within a subject-object relation. Discourse implies the structure of communication: it implies the existential structure of Dasein’s Being-with-one-another-ness. Dasein is in discourse always implies that the others are there with it. The common practices determine the grammatical rules, so long as Dasein follows these rules, that which is talked about can be made known to the others. Only with regards to the structure of Being-in-the-world, the function of *apophainesthai* can be fulfilled.<sup>21</sup>

The discovery of *logos* as discourse is important in Heideggerian studies. We shall not go into the details of his discussion of *logos*. For the purpose of discussion here, we shall conclude that Heidegger rejects the Latin translation of *zoon logon echon* into *animal rationale*. Only if *logos* is referred back to its original meaning as discourse, can the phenomenal content of the Greek definition of man be explicated and can Dasein be disclosed as a Being-in-the-world.

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being of what is”.

<sup>21</sup> For further discussion of the function of *logos* as *apophainesthai*, see F. von Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins: Eine Erläuterung von “Sein und Zeit”, Band 1 Einleitung die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987, pp.316-334.



c. *The essence of man lies in its existence or humanitas*

The understanding of man as *zoon logon echon* is also criticized for taking man as a kind of animal. We may make a limited reference to the “later” Heideggerian critique to anthropology. In *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger contrasts *animal rationale* with *homo humanitas*. The most essential investigation of man is, “whether the essence of man primordially and most decisively lies in the dimension of *animalitas* at all” (BW 227). And as a rational animal, despite his possession of *ratio*, man shares the same animality with other organism. That defines man in terms of an organism comparing to beast and plants. Heidegger says:

Man can be conceived as an organism, and has been so conceived for a long time. Man so conceived is ranked with plants and animals, regardless of whether we assume that rank order to show an evolution, or classify the genera of organisms in some other way. Even when man is marked out as the rational living entity, he is still been seen in a way in which his character as an organism remains decisive ... All anthropology continues to be dominated by the idea that man is an organism. Philosophical anthropology as well as scientific anthropology will *not* use man’s essential nature as the starting point for their definition of man” (Heidegger’s italic WCT 148).

Heidegger criticizes that the traditional metaphysical understanding of man only thinks on the basis of *animalitas* and does not think in the direction of his *humanitas* (BW 227). “If we are to think of man as not an organism [*Lebewesen*] but a human being [*Menschenwesen*],” Heidegger says, “we must first give attention to the fact that man is that entity who has his Being by

pointing to what is, and that particular entities manifest themselves as such by such pointing” (WCT 148-149). According to §7 of *Being and Time*, pointing out something and let this something be seen is the function of *logos* (see BT 56). Once again, the investigation into the essential character of man demands an understanding of *logos*. By pointing something out, what is primordially pointed out is the Being of the talked about. Making manifest of the Being of entities is interpreted as the understanding of Being [*Seinsverständnis*] in *Being and Time* whereas in *Letter on Humanism*, it is called Dasein’s openness to Being.

Grounded in Dasein’s understanding of Being, Dasein points out the Being of other entities. In other words, Dasein determines the presence or “being-within-the-world-ness” of the other entities. In terms of *Being and Time* and Heidegger’s lectures in the 20’s, this relatedness of Dasein to the intra-worldly beings is called “letting-be” [*Seinlassen*]. Dasein points out the Being of them and in so pointing, it also relates itself to its own Being. Therefore, the explication of the *humanitas* of man involves an ontological explication of the relatedness of Dasein to other entities, to its own Being, and to Being in general. This relatedness lies in Dasein’s existence.

“Existence” is a distinct characteristic of Being that is solely designated to the entities called Dasein. It is a “human way ‘to be’” (BW 228). Accordingly to this meaning, animals and plants “are” but they do not “exist”. Existence does not belong to a specific kind of living creature among others—granted that man is destined to have Being as its issue for itself (see BT 67). The approach of the



*animalitas* covers up the essential *humanitas* of man; it levels up the distinctiveness of being human.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, the inquiry of Dasein's Being into its mineness cannot be undertaken as anthropology does. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger indeed abandons the usage of the term "man" to avoid confusion.

#### **D. The question of who of Dasein**

The Dasein analytic is now confirmed to be the access to the question of Being. Hence it is regulated by the question of Being. The analytic, thus, aims at a "proper explication of an entity (Dasein), with regard to its Being" (BT 27). Then the question is: how can "the right way of access to" Dasein be obtained? In the last section, we have discussed the ontological determination of Dasein as "existence" and "mineness". However, they are only "formal indications" which are to be further explicated.

As we have discussed in the previous section, Dasein is traditionally taken to be present-at-hand. In *Being and Time*, explicating the Being of Dasein is at the same time a task of differentiating the Being of Dasein and the Being of present-at-hand. Heidegger writes,

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<sup>22</sup> Heidegger has gone so far as saying, "the human body is something essentially other than an animal organism" (BW 228). Discussion of the organic, physical dispersion of human beings is always excluded from the ontological analytic. Another example of this tendency is Heidegger's discussion on "the hand" in his latter writings. See Jacques Derrida, "La main de Heidegger" in *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre*, Paris: Galilée, 1987, pp.415-451.



All *explicata* to which the analytic of Dasein gives rise are obtained by considering Dasein's existential structure. Because Dasein's characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them "*existentialia*". These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call "categories"—characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein (BT 70).

Also in the same paragraph, he continues:

*Existentialia* and categories are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being. The entities which correspond to them require different kind of primary interrogation respectively: any entity is either a "*who*" (existence) or a "*what*" (presence-at-hand in the broadest sense) (BT 71).

"Whatness" asks about the essence [*essentia* and *ousia*] of a thing that is a given present-at-hand. In the traditional sense, the "*who*" question also asks about the individuality of the "given" subject. Though this subject may have a certain kind of personality as well. The two questions are directed to a *quid* of present-at-hand.

In contrast to the present-at-hand, the explication of the existentiality of Dasein has to be interrogated by a new sense of whoness. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger also says, "we gain access to this entity only if we ask: Who is it?" He stresses, "Dasein is not constituted by whatness but—if we may coin the *whoness*" (BP 120). Heidegger says, "No doubt we do ask such a question. But this only shows that this what, with which we also ask about the nature of the who, obviously cannot coincide with the what in the sense of

whatness" (BP 120). In Heidegger's discussion of the specific way of posing the who-question, we see that he is aware of the tendency of questioning its whoness in terms of the whatness of things. Such a tendency is explained in Dasein's structure of Being-in-the-world. By doing so, the "whoness" of Dasein which can be taken as a present-at-hand is also included in this structure. Then, the question of the who of Dasein is not driven to an I-thing or person-thing. Rather, what is at issue is Dasein's way of Being as Being-in-the-world. That "who" which is in question will be rendered no more than a "way of Being" (BT 153). Heidegger points out that this tendency is rooted in Dasein's Being. He states:

The kind of Being which belongs to Dasein is rather such that, in understanding its own Being, it has a tendency to do so in terms of that entity towards which it comports itself proximally and in a way which is essentially constant—in terms of the world (BT 36).

The tendency of comporting itself towards the kind of entity that is not itself creates the hermeneutical difficulty for gaining the access to Dasein. In other words, the access to the question of the Being of Dasein is difficult to attain because Dasein's Being still remains concealed. The way of Being that Dasein tends to comport itself to the world is called everydayness [*Alltlichkeit*]; this everyday way of existence is called "averageness" [*Durchschnittlichkeit*]. In this way of Being, Dasein is proximally and for the most part "indifferent" to its ontological distinction. In addition, it is indeed "undifferentiated" from the present-at-hand [*Vorhanden*].

Re-establishing the ontological difference of Dasein is the main task of *Being and Time*. Hence, it aims at differentiating Dasein from the present-at-



hand. In *Being and Time*, the sentences like, "Dasein does not have the kind of Being which belongs to present-at-hand [*Vorhanden*] within the world, nor does it ever have it" (BT 68) appear repeatedly. We shall find that rendering this differentiation does not mean to differentiate them conceptually. However, the tendency of understanding itself as a present-at-hand is indeed an explanation of the structure of this tendency. This tendency is the "facticity" of Dasein as its way of Being as a Being-in-the-world. Heidegger says,

But the fact that "Dasein" can be taken as something which is present-at-hand and just present-at-hand, is not to be confused with a certain way of "presence-at-hand" which is Dasein's own (BT 82).

The way that Dasein comports itself to the present-at-hand is regarded to be the structure of Dasein's existence. It involves explaining Dasein as a Being-in-the-world and describes Dasein's tendency to understand itself as a present-at-hand. The explication of this tendency must not be confused with the facticity of Dasein, the intraworldliness of the entities ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand. We shall see that present-at-hand is treated only as a theoretical object that is based on the insufficient understanding of the phenomenon of the world.

The question of "what" is demonstrated as an ingenuine question of the Being of the intraworldly thing. In this question, a "thing" emerges as the theoretical present-at-hand. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explains that the Being-present-at-hand-ness is not the primary state of Being that an entity shows itself in itself to Dasein. Opposing to the theoretical objectification of things,



Heidegger raises the primacy of *praxis*.<sup>23</sup> Since Dasein is a Being-in-the-world, it always encounters entities within this ontological constitution. Entities are encountered in Dasein's concerned dealings [*besoregen Umgang*]. Heidegger appropriates Dasein's "concerned dealings" to the Greek *praxis* and the thing that is so encountered as *pragmata*—equipment [*Zeug*] (BT 96-97). Heidegger explains that things such as ink, paper, table, lamp "never show themselves proximally as they are for themselves, so as to add up to a sum of *realia* and fill up a room" (BT 98). We encounter the room as an equipment for residing. In the context of the room, the "arrangement" emerges and within which the "individual" item of equipment shows itself. Namely, *before* the individual equipment shows itself, the totality of equipment has already been disclosed.

Furthermore, Heidegger says, "Equipment can genuinely show itself only in dealings cut to its own measure (hammering with a hammer, for example); but in such dealings an entity of this kind is not *grasped* thematically as an occurring thing, nor is the equipment-structure known as such even in the using" (BT 98). He regards the hammering does not simply have knowledge about [*um*] the hammer's character as equipment. It has only appropriated this equipment in a way which could not possibly be more suitable. In such dealings, Heidegger explains that our concern subordinates itself to the "in-order-to" [*Um-zu*] which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time.

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<sup>23</sup> See BT 97-99 and BP §11b. For further discussion of *praxis* in the Heideggerian thinking, see also Heidegger's *Plato's Sophist*, §5. *Praxis* is interpreted as modes of *Alétheuein*; Franco Volpi, "Dasein as praxis: the Heideggerian assimilation and radicalization of the practical philosophy of Aristotle", *Critical Heidegger*, Christopher Macann ed., London: Routledge, 1996, pp.27-66.

Theoretical consideration does not apply in such dealing. On the contrary, “the less we just stare at the hammer-thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relation to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is—as equipment” (BT 98). Heidegger thinks that this is the primary state that the equipment shows itself in itself to Dasein. The kind of Being of equipment is called “readiness-to-hand” [*Zuhandenheit*].

By this token, the theoretical thing (present-at-hand) emerges only as secondary. We have already quoted from Heidegger that “‘things’ never shows themselves proximally as they are for themselves” (BT 97-98). Heidegger says, “if we look at things just ‘theoretically’, we can get along without understanding readiness-to-hand” (BT 98). But only ready-to-hand has the ‘Being-in-itself’ in its self-showing as itself. Therefore, the theoretical “staring” on the thing does not grasp the genuine phenomenal content of the entity that is being encountered by Dasein. Pure presence-at-hand announces itself in the equipment only to withdraw to the readiness-to-hand with which one concerns oneself (BT 103). In other words, only when an equipment is missing, unusable or misplaced, and it becomes an “un-ready-to-hand” would it emerge as a present-at-hand. Accordingly, the Being of the present-at-hand-ness of thing demands a clarification of Dasein’s Being beforehand. The relationship between present-at-hand and Dasein is not just a theoretical opposition. Rather, the Being of present-at-hand has an ontological constitutive relationship to Dasein’s existence as a Being-in-the-world.

The question of “what” is not suitable for an explication of the primary way of Being of Dasein. Furthermore, since Dasein is an entity that is “in each case



mine” and the answer to the who-question is no more than “I am it”. Heidegger’s question does not ask about the “I” thing but Dasein’s I-saying. Saying “I” is primarily a way of self-expression in our everyday mode of Being. Likewise, being “I” is also treated as a way of Being but not a certitude. In addition, being an “I” is a way of Being of Dasein in its everyday pre-theoretical life. This way of Being is called Being-in-the-world. Only in rendering Dasein as a Being-in-the-world, can the whole phenomenon of saying “I” and the tendency that takes itself as a present-at-hand can be exhibited. In this sense, the question of “who” is not questioning on a “what” (*res cogitans*, soul, or substance) of Dasein, but the way of Being of its Being-in-the-world.

## **E. Conclusion**

In the above discussion, we have shown that the question of Being is structurally determined to start with the Dasein analytic. It is due to the circular structure of the question. It is because the question of Being has to be guided by an “understanding of Being” [*Seinsverständnis*] of Dasein. Such an understanding is indeed Dasein’s relationship-to-Being [*Seinsverhältnis*]. It is an ontological structure of Dasein. As long as Dasein exists, it has an understanding of Being. In addition, understanding of Being refers to another structure of Dasein—Being is an issue of Dasein. In this stage of discussion, we shall provisionally understand this regulation of Being of Dasein in terms of two formal indications: existence [*Existenz*] and mineness [*Jemeinigkeit*].

Questioning the Being of Dasein is indeed different from the traditional ways. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger distinguishes Dasein analytic from anthropology.

The question whether Dasein is a creation of God, or how Dasein is different from another animal with its endowment of reason [*logos*] is not the point of the Dasein analytic. Heidegger criticizes that the traditional ways of studying the Being of man in terms of I, subject, soul or spirit fail “to see the need for inquiring about the Being” of Dasein (BT 72). Indeed, Heidegger criticizes that the neglect of the question of the Being of Dasein is at the same time a passing over of the ontological distinction of Dasein. He points out that either taking Dasein as substance, or I, soul or person is a reification of Dasein, i.e., taking Dasein as a thing present-at-hand.

Heidegger thinks that the omission of the question of Being is not only a matter of not seeing a property of the Dasein. However, Being is not just a property of Dasein. Rather, it is the determination of Dasein as an entity that it is (BT 25). Namely, omission of the question of Being of Dasein is in fact a failure of determining Dasein in its essence. Since Dasein is determined as an existent that its way of Being is determined as something possesses understanding of Being and is in each case mine. Thus, omission of the question of Being of Dasein is the root of inadequately regarding Dasein a present-at-hand. Hence, one task of the Dasein analytic, with Dasein’s Being in view, in contrast with the traditional failure, is to reappropriate the ontological difference of Dasein.

Likewise, assigning the who-question as the sole way of questioning the Being of Dasein is also a move to differentiate Dasein from present-at-hand. That Heidegger creates the new meaning of “whoness” as a point of departure for a new horizon of posing the question of the Being of Dasein in which the “I” is considered as the phenomenon of I-saying. In the next chapter, we shall discuss how Heidegger contrasts the new interpretation of whoness with Descartes’



*cogito sum*. He thinks that Descartes has rightly declared the first modern unshakable truth. Heidegger says, "historiologically, the aim of the existential analytic can be made plainer by considering Descartes, ... by his '*cogito sum*'" (BT 71-72). However, Descartes is renounced for not having determined the Being of the *sum* and is absorbed in the investigations into the *res cogitans*. Kant, however, is recognized as the one who has retrieved the phenomenal content of I-saying to the "I think". However, Heidegger thinks that Kant also fails to locate the question of Being of the subject. He only presumes both the I and the things outside of me are all present-at-hand. In this sense, Heidegger thinks that Kant has not followed strictly enough in the way of explicating the phenomenon of Dasein's I-saying. It is because, he thinks, every "I think" must be thought as "I think something". The "something" is not only representation present-at-hand, but it has an ontological relationship with the I in the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world. Thus, as a Being-in-the-world, in any saying "I am", Dasein expresses "I am in the world". The "I am" as the most immediate answer to the who-question, is disclosed as a "I-am-in-the-world".

## Chapter II

### Confronting Descartes' and Kant's "I am"

*Retrieving the phenomenon of saying "I": from "I am" to "I-am-in-the-world"*

#### A. Introduction

In the last chapter, we have discussed that the Dasein analytic is undertaken as the point of departure toward the question of Being in *Being and Time*. Also, it is the question of "who" that is one of the guiding problematic to Dasein analytic. The who-question of Dasein aims at clarifying the ontological difference between Dasein and present-at-hand. Thus, Dasein cannot be interrogated in terms of a "what". The setting of the who-question is also regulated by its ontological motive: clarifying the meaning of the Being of Dasein. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger states, "The Being of entities 'is' not itself an entity. If we are to understand the problem of Being, our first step consists in ... not defining entities as entities by tracing them back in their origin to some other entities, as if Being had the character of some possible entity" (BT 26).

In this chapter, we shall discuss how Heidegger has rejected the traditional understanding of the answer to the question, "I am this Dasein". In common sense, the content of this expression is utterly simple: it stands for me and nothing further (see BT 366). The obviousness of the content of the expression "I am this Dasein" seems to be given immediately. According to this ordinary



understanding, if the who-question is to be carried out in a theoretical manner, the I is always seen as some kind of subject. Heidegger says:

If we posit an "I" or subject as that which is proximally given, we shall completely miss the phenomenal content of Dasein. Ontologically, every idea of a "subject" ... still posits the *subjectum* (*hypokeimenon*) along with it, no matter how one's ontical protestations against the "soul substance" or the "reification of consciousness". The thinghood itself which such reification implies must have its ontological origin demonstrated if we are to be in a position to ask what we are to understand *positively* when we think of the unreified *Being* of the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person (BT 72).

Dasein is not a thing. Its Being is "defined" as something that Being is always an issue for it. Also if Heidegger's who-question is a question about the Being of Dasein, its mineness, it cannot start from the I as a subject. For it will only lead to an ontical explanation of the I into another kind of entity. The Being of the "I" thus, is the issue. But how does Heidegger start questioning the who-question without a determined point of departure from the I?

The point of departure of Heidegger's answering the who-question is the phenomenon of I-saying; it is a mode of Being of Dasein. Heidegger regards Descartes the one who manifests the ultimate ground of saying "I" by declaring "*ego sum, ego existo*"—"I am, I exist". He thinks that the Cartesian *sum* would have raised the question of Being of the "I". Thus, the Cartesian "*cogito sum*" (BT 71-72), if its Being is sufficiently considered as a problem, it can be the ontological access to the phenomenon of the "I am". However, Descartes fails to

see the *sum* a problem. The ontological insight of the *sum* subsides right after it is declared beneath the *res cogitans*—the question of whatness.

Heidegger thinks that if the phenomenon of saying “I” is to be explicated, the Cartesian *cogito sum* has to be reversed to be *sum cogito* (BT 254). The meaning of the *sum* is also revised not just as “I am”, but “I am in the world” (HCT 216). Heidegger’s studies on the Kantian “I think” paves the road to converting the “I am” into “I am in the world” (BT §64). He thinks that only through such a conversion, can the phenomenon be full explicated.

## **B. The Criticism on the Cartesian Ego**

Heidegger says:

Historiologically, the aim of the existential analytic can be made plainer by considering Descartes, who is credited with providing the point of departure for modern philosophical inquiry by his discovery of the “*cogito sum*”. He investigates the “*cogitare*” of the “*ego*”, at least within certain limits. On the other hand, he leaves the *sum* completely undiscussed, even though it is regarded as no less primordial as than the *cogito*. Our analytic raises the ontological question of the Being of the *sum* (BT 71-72).

As early as 1921, Heidegger has undertaken the confrontation with Descartes. In the course “Aristotle Introduction”,<sup>24</sup> Jean-Luc Marion points that

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<sup>24</sup> Heidegger’s 1921-22 Freiburg Lecture “*Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu*



out Heidegger's interest in Descartes never subsides from the beginning of his career right up to the end. In the mind of young Heidegger, Descartes poses the question of Being by giving privilege to the *sum* as the first certitude. In Marion's view, Heidegger believes that Descartes has raised a powerful question of Being, upon the meaning of the "am". Heidegger says, "The weight of the question is placed immediately, without any motive and following the traditional standpoint, upon the 'I', whereby the meaning of the 'I' remains essentially undetermined, instead [being placed] upon the meaning of the 'I think' of the 'am.'"<sup>25</sup>

Giving the priority to the question of the *sum* can, for Heidegger, be a new beginning for ontology. Heidegger thinks that the *sum* or "I am" is indeed the "real philosophical problem" (BT 71) and that Descartes fails to grasp. In the *Mediationes*, Descartes moves right on from the *sum* to ask "What this 'I' is?"<sup>26</sup> Thus, the metaphysical tendency takes over the ontological insight and surpasses the question of Being. Therefore, Heidegger says,

If the "*cogito sum*" is to serve as the point of departure for the existential analytic of Dasein, then it needs to be turned around, and furthermore, its content needs new ontologico-phenomenal confirmation. The "*sum*" is then asserted first, and indeed in the sense

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*Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*". The material of discussion on this lecture is based on Jean-Luc Marion's citations in his *Reduction and Givenness*, Chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 78 (it is originally in the *Privatdozent*, GA 61, *Anhang 1*, p.172).

<sup>26</sup> René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham, New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge: 1993, 17-18. This book will be referred as "*Meditations*" here in this thesis.

that "I am in a world". As such an entity, "I am: in the possibility of Being towards various ways of comporting myself—namely, *cogitationes*—as ways of Being alongside entities within-the-world. Descartes, on the contrary, says that *cogitationes* are present-at-hand, and that in these an *ego* is present-at-hand too as a worldless *res cogitans* (BT 254);

It is not *cogito sum* which formulates a primary finding but rather *sum cogito*. And this *sum* is not taken in the ontological indifference in which Descartes and his successors took it, as the extantness of a thinking thing. *Sum* here is the assertion of the basic constitution of my Being: I-am-in-a-world and therefore I am capable of thinking it (HCT 216).

The "turning around" of the "*cogito sum*" signifies Heidegger's opposition of Descartes. With regard to the ontological distinctiveness of Dasein as an existent, Dasein cannot be defined as the *res cogito* that is present-at-hand. Moreover, Heidegger also renews the phenomenal content of the items: the "*sum*" does not signify an undifferentiated "is" of Dasein. Rather, ontological difference is stressed if a Dasein "is", it is not a present-at-hand that occurs. Instead, it always signifies Dasein "is" a "Being-in-the-world". And that it is a "who". Accordingly, the "*cogitation*" means comportment—the ways of Being-in in the world of Dasein.

The task of the Dasein analytic is to make the Being of Dasein, the *sum*, transparent. However, Descartes is always criticized with regard to his omission of the determination of the meaning of *sum*. He criticizes that,



With the “*cogito sum*” Descartes had claimed that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing. But what he left undetermined when he began in this “radical” way, was the kind of the *meaning of Being of the “sum”* (BT 46).

The Cartesian *cogito* has covered up the ontological meaning of the “*sum*”. Thus, the ontological foundations of the “*cogito sum*” is omitted and Descartes “failed to provide an ontology of Dasein” (BT 46). Heidegger’s criticism on the indeterminacy of the *sum* in Descartes philosophy can be discussed in two points: (1) the indeterminacy of the *sum*; and (2) the indeterminacy of substantiality.

### 1. Indeterminacy of the *sum*

Heidegger sees that the tendency of the ontological omission is based on the move that Descartes determines the *Ego* as certitude. In the *Second Meditation*, Descartes said, “... I must finally conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever its is put forward by me or conceived in my mind”.<sup>27</sup> Descartes thinks that “a sufficient understanding of what is this ‘I’ is, that now necessarily exists”, means to determine it by “*res cogitans*”.<sup>28</sup> The *res cogitans* is determined as something that has consciousness [*cogitationes*]. However, Heidegger thinks that consciousness and representation are not sufficient to reveal the Being of this *res*. He points out that the “*res*” is only understood as a “something” (BT 126). In this sense, Heidegger deems Descartes and his

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<sup>27</sup> *Meditations*, p.17.

<sup>28</sup> *Meditations*, p.18.

decedents surpass the question of Being. Also, Dasein's Being is leveled down to equal to other entities, its ontological difference of neglected. In this sense, Heidegger finds the Cartesian thinking of *cogito sum* unsatisfying. He says, "[Descartes] investigates the *cogitare*, at least within certain limits. On the other hand, he leaves the '*sum*' completely undiscussed, even though it is regarded as no primordial than the *cogito*" (BT 71).

Heidegger thinks that Descartes' neglect of the meaning of Being is rooted in the Ancient and Christian ontology. Defining the *ego* as *res*, Descartes thinks that the *res cogitans* is ontologically an *ens creatum*. This thesis refers back to the medieval Christian ontology (see BT 46). The determination of Being of entities are rooted in the distinction between God, "*ens infinitum*" and "*ens increatum*". The distinction of the entities according to their "createdness" [*Geschaffenheit*] in the widest sense of having been produced [*Hergestelltheit*],<sup>29</sup> was an essential theme of the ancient conception of Being. Heidegger says:

the seemingly new beginning which Descartes proposed for philosophizing has revealed itself as the implantation of the baleful prejudice, which has kept later generations from making any thematic ontological analytic of the "mind" [*Gemütes*] such as would take the question of Being as a clue and would at the same time come to grips critically with the traditional ancient ontology (BT 46).

The distinction of the infinite entity (God) and the finite entity (*res cogitans* and *res extensa*) according to their createdness means:

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<sup>29</sup> See BP §11b.



All entities other than God need to be “produced” in the widest sense and also to be sustained. “Being” is to be understood within a horizon which ranges from the production of what is present-at-hand to something which has no need being produced. (BT 125).

Thus, the Cartesian “*sum*” that is determined as the Being of a *res* according to its createdness, turns out to determine the Being of the *ego* according to another entity. This way of questioning in fact fails to see the difference between Being and entities. The question of Being has not yet been correctly posed.

Moreover, both the *res cogitans* and the *res corporea* are expressed by the term “existence”. Their differences are only distinguished by their ranking in their createdness. The question of difference is set on the comparison of “thinking” with “extension”. By this token, the ontological difference of *ego* (Dasein) from the present-at-hand is also omitted. The existence of the *ego* is expressed as the same as the existence of the present-at-hand. They are all expressed as “*res*”. Thus, Heidegger criticizes that Descartes is indifferent to the ontological difference (HCT 216). Marion adds, “The certitude of the *ego cogito* therefore does not abolish the indetermination in it of the *sum* and of the *esse* but rather reinforced that indetermination”.<sup>30</sup> Dasein’s way of Being then become leveled off as the one among the present-at-hand. Dasein’s characteristic of existence and mineness are missed completely. Therefore, the indetermination of the *sum* is the main criticism that Heidegger makes on Descartes. In this sense, he says, “If the ‘*cogito sum*’ is to serve as the point of departure for the existential

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<sup>30</sup> *Reduction and Givenness*, p.88.

analytic of Dasein, then it needs to be turned around, and furthermore, its content needs new ontologico-phenomenal confirmation” (BT 254).

## 2. Indeterminacy of substantiality

The formulation of Descartes’ idea of *res cogitans* goes back to the medieval ontology. The meaning of Being has always referred to “substance”. However, the meaning of “substance” is used ambiguously in this tradition. It is used to express “Being” in two different manners:

On the one hand, it sometimes is an ontological determination. Descartes says, “by substance, we can understand nothing else than an entity which *is* in such a way that it needs no other entity in order *to be*” (BT 125).<sup>31</sup> The Being of a substance is determined by its independence of other entities in order to be. This meaning of substantiality has to be conceived through the idea of “God”. Here “God” is an “purely ontological term” (BT 125) for the *ens perfectissimum*. Furthermore, “God” is also a self-evident concept that is designed to sustain the differentiation of entities by their producedness. Thus, God is distinctive from the creation. Also, within the realm of created entity, man is distinctive from the *res extensa* (nature, the world) because man is relatively that which is in no need of other entity. The *res cogitans* is therefore a substance.

On the other hand, “substance” is used in the ontical senses: that God, man and *res extensa* “are” substances. However, there is an infinite difference among the substantiality of them. Thus, the word “is” cannot be meant to apply to these

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<sup>31</sup> Heidegger’s citation from *Principia Philosophiae*, I, pr.51.



entities in the same sense. The medieval ontological problem is based on this multiplicity of the meaning of Being. The Schoolmen problematize the issue in the positive side: to achieve an univocal signification of the word "Being". However, Heidegger thinks that Descartes "evades" the ontological problem altogether. He points out that Descartes "failed to discuss the meaning of Being which the idea of substantiality embraces, or the 'universality' which belongs to this signification" (BT 126).

Descartes emphasizes that substance as such—that is to say, substantiality—is in and for itself inaccessible. He thinks that Being itself does not affect us, and therefore cannot be perceived (BT 126).<sup>32</sup> Because Being is not accessible as an entity, it is expressed through attributes. In *Principia Philosophiae*, Descartes said that substance cannot be first discovered merely from the fact that it is a thing that exist. "We may, however, easily discover it by means of any one of its attributes because it is a common notion that nothing is possessed of no attribute, properties, or qualities".<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the substantiality can be grasped by the attribute but not by it Being.

Heidegger considers Descartes' investigations a study of the attributes of different substances. For example, the ontological ground for the "world" is defined as *res extensa*, i.e. Being of *res extensa* is not only left unclarified, but its clarification is thought to be impossible. In turn, Being is represented by way of whatever substantial property that pertains to it. Heidegger thinks that this way of defining the characteristic of a substance is based on the fact that the ontological

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<sup>32</sup> Heidegger's citation from *Principia Philosophiae*, I, pr.51.

<sup>33</sup> *Principia Philosophiae*, I, pr.52.

and ontical function of the word “substantiality” is left unclarified. He thinks that the Cartesian ambiguity is due to the “failure to master the basic problem of Being” (BT 127). Descartes dose not see the difference between substantiality (Being) and substance (entity).

### **C. The Criticism on the Kantian Cogito**

The answer to the question of “who” of Dasein is “I am it”. Descartes demonstrates the traditional tendency of determining the “I” as a thing, i.e. the *res cogitans*. This “I” also always “stands for me and nothing further” (BT 366). Likewise, this “I” is regarded as something simple. It is not an attribute of other things; in other words, it is not itself a predicate but the “subject”. This “I” as the “subject” is also grasped as a “unity of body, soul and spirit” (BT 366, 73-74). It is rooted in the Greek ontology. In the Modern philosophy, starting from the Cartesian *ego* as the first indubitable truth, the “I” gains its place as the absolute “subject” that is distinct from other entities. The “I”, the “human subjectivity” becomes the center of thought in the Modern Philosophy.<sup>34</sup> Heidegger says:

It will be expected that ontology now takes the subject as exemplary entity and interprets the concept of Being by looking to the mode of Being of the subject—that henceforth the subject’s way of Being becomes an ontological problem. But that is precisely what does not happen (BP 123).

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<sup>34</sup> See WT 98-99 and BP 123.



In the above discussion on Heidegger's criticism on the indeterminacy of the Cartesian *sum*, we have seen that the problem of Being of the *ego* is omitted; and that the *ego* is only grasped ontically as a thing. In his criticism of this tradition, Heidegger thinks that Kant is the unique thinker that conforms strictly with the phenomenal content given in the I-saying and does not fall prey to the traditional way of determining the *ego*. The *Paralogism of Pure Reason* is a unique breakthrough from the tradition that sees the "impossibility of ontically reducing the 'I' to a substance" (BT 367). However, Kant has only rejected a wrong ontical explanation of the I. Kant has not yet achieved an ontological Interpretation of Selfhood, nor has he even obtained some assurance of it and made positive preparation for it.

Moreover, Heidegger says:

Kant makes a more rigorous attempt than his predecessors to keep hold of the phenomenal content of saying "I"; yet even though in theory he has denied that the ontical foundations of the ontology of the substantial apply to the "I", he still slips back into *this same* inappropriate ontology (BT 366).

Kant's slipping back to the tradition of taking the *ego* as a substance is rooted in his understanding of this *ego* as an "I bind together". "In each taking-together or relating, the 'I' always underlies—the *hypokeimenon*" (BT 367). In this treatment, Kant interprets the "I" as a consciousness, "I think", that is not a representation but the "form" of representation in general. The "I" is determined as the "logical subject". Heidegger said, "this 'I', is "subject again". (BT 367). But the primary determination of the subject in the sense of the *hypokeimenon* is

suppressed in self-consciousness, or in self-conceiving. Heidegger points out that “it was already no longer a specific ontological problem but was among things taken for granted as evident” (BP 152-3). Not only the question of Being is omitted but the ontological difference is also concealed. Therefore the determination of the “I” as the “logical I” is in fact “ontologically inappropriate” (BT 367).

However, Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is our only concern here in this thesis, so we shall not go into Kant’s project of *Transcendental Logic*. We shall only focus on Heidegger’s critique on Kant in BT §64 and §43b. In these two paragraphs, we do not go into the detail of the full elucidation of Heidegger’s criticism on the Kantian ego. The issue cannot be completed without a study on the Kantian moral person. We do not attempt to answer why Heidegger thinks that Kant determines *ego* again as a finite subject. Our discussion only ends at the demonstration of the insufficiency of the Kantian “I think” as an omission of the phenomenon of the Being-in-the-world.

### **1. The Paralogism of Pure Reason**

In Heidegger’s view, the *Paralogism of Pure Reason* has two positive aspects: “For one thing, he sees the impossibility of ontically reducing the ‘I’ to a substance; for another thing, he holds fast to the ‘I’ as ‘I think’” (BT 367); it finally arrived to the conclusion that the ontical theses about the soul-substance which have been inferred from these characteristics are without justification” (see BT 366).

We shall only make a provisional interpretation of Kant’s work. It is because our interpretation is guided by Heidegger’s comments. In §64, Heidegger



comments that Kant's critique is "a strict conformity with the phenomenal content given in saying 'I'" (BT 366). Therefore, we shall now elaborate how Kant's critique of the paralogism is incorporated into the discussion of the phenomenon of saying "I".

In the *Paralogism of the Substantiality* (CPR A348)<sup>35</sup>, Kant said that the substantiality of the "I" is inferred from the judgement "I think": the "I", as a thinking entity, the *absolute subject* of all my possible judgements, and this presentation of myself cannot be used as predicate of any other thing; Therefore I, as a thinking entity (soul), am a substance. Heidegger describes this paralogism similarly as, "something simple, [the 'I'] is not an attribute of other things; it is not a predicate" (BT 366). Heidegger thinks that the concept of "I" is merely derived from Dasein's everyday immediate understanding of saying "I". The paralogism of simplicity is reinterpreted in the following way:

With the "I", this entity has itself in view. The content of this expression is regarded as something *utterly* simple. In each case, it stands for me and nothing further (BT 366).

Likewise, the paralogism of personality is reinterpreted as "What is expressed and what is addressed in saying 'I', is always met as the same persisting something" (BT 366). With this reinterpretation of the paralogism, what Kant

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<sup>35</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Backett Publishing Company: 1996.

denounces as transcendental illusion is interpreted under the heading of the ontical experience of the I.<sup>36</sup>

The Kantian critique of the paralogism of pure reason is to be reinterpreted as the retrieval of the phenomenal content of I-saying. Saying "I" does not infer an ontical experience of the *ego* as a thing. The understanding of the "I" in Dasein's I-saying is then to be backed up by Kant's critique. The ontical understanding of the "I" is then examined by the question: "whether we have experienced ontically in this way may be interpreted ontologically with the help of 'categories' mentioned" (366 [318]). Likewise, Heidegger says:

Kant shows for the first time that in no sense can anything be asserted about the *ego* as spiritual substance by means of an application of the categories to the *ego* as "I think" (BP 144).

"Categories", according to the Transcendental Logic in CPR, are the forms of possible combination which thinking can accomplish as combining. It can only be applied to objects of experience. Because the *ego* is "I think", which is in every thinking the condition of the possibility of the unifying I-combine, it is also the condition of the categories. Therefore, the *ego*, as the synthetic original unity of apperception, cannot be determined by categories.

The categories are not applicable to the *ego* for another reason: since all thinking is an "I think something", the *ego* is not any arbitrary point but the "I think". It accompanies all representations as the possibility of them. Thus, Kant said,

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<sup>36</sup> Heidegger and the Subject, p.78.



I am not conscious to myself as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but am conscious only that I am. This *presentation* is not a *thought*, not an *intuition* (CPR B157).

The *ego* as the synthetic original unity is not the manifold or the combinable, but the combining and condition of combining of the manifold. The “I think” cannot be intuited as what it is, but only known as that it is. And categories are applicable only where the combinable is given. Thus, categories are, again, not applicable to determine the *ego*.

Heidegger sees that the demonstration of the inapplicability of categories on the *ego* is a main breakthrough of the tradition. It shows Kant’s refutation of the possibility of ontically reducing the “I” to a substance. Thus, the saying “I” is indeed a phenomenon of “I am conscious of ...” and the “I” is neither a self-intuition or a substance. The phenomenal content of saying “I” is exhibited primarily as the “I combine” and “I think”.

## **2. The fall back to the indeterminacy of substance**

Although Heidegger agrees that Kant’s critique is “wholly right when he declares the categories, as fundamental concepts of nature, unsuitable for determining the *ego*” (BP 145). But it does not follow from the inadequacy of the categories of nature that every ontological interpretation whatever of the *ego* is impossible. Heidegger thinks that the refutation of paralogisms achieves no more than a refutation. He says that Kant has only “rejects a wrong ontical explanation of the ‘I’; he has by no means achieved an ontological Interpretation of Selfhood,

nor has he even obtain some assurance of it and made positive preparation of it” (BT 366).

Heidegger quotes the note in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*:

The I think expresses the act of determining my existence. Hence the existence [of myself] is already given through this I think; but there is not yet given through it the way in which I am to determine that existence, i.e., posit the manifold belonging to it. In order for that manifold to be given, self-intuition I required; and at the basis of this self-intuition lies a form given a priori, viz., time, which is sensible and belongs to the ability to receive the determinable. Now unless I have in addition an different self-intuition a different self-intuition that gives, prior to the act of determination [*des Bestimmens*], the determinative [*das Bestimmende*] in me (only of its spontaneity am I in fact conscious) just as *time* so gives the determinable, then I cannot determine my existence as that of a self-active being; instead I present only the spontaneity of my thought, i.e., of the [act of] determination, and my existence remains determinable always only sensibly, i.e., as the existence of an appearance. But it is on account of this spontaneity that I call myself an *intelligence* (CPR B158).

In this passage, Heidegger criticizes that Kant falls back to the tradition by saying time is the form of sensibility. The “I” exists as an intelligence that is the indispensable requirement for the possibility of experience. It is conscious solely



of its power of combination.<sup>37</sup> What the intelligence cognizes of itself is the “pure *ego*, the “logical I” that is the form of consciousness (see CPR B405-409).<sup>38</sup> Thus, it presents itself only as the spontaneity of thought that cannot be intuited in term of time relation. Since “time” is the form of sensibility, and the “I” is not intuitable in terms of time, thus, “I have no self-intuition”. Because of the inapplicability of categories, Kant at the same time rejects all kinds of ontological determination of the *ego*. Heidegger said that since Kant assigns time to sensibility, that he only has natural time in view. It is obvious that Kant’s interpretation remains within the metaphysical tradition.

In §6 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger criticizes that Kant failed to achieve an insight of Temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*]. Even though he brings time back to the subject again, his analysis remains oriented towards the traditional way in which time is ordinarily understood as a natural concept. Thus, the connection between time and the subject (“I think”) “shrouded in utter darkness; it did not even become a problem” (BT 45). Heidegger criticizes that it shows that Kant “shrinks back, as it were, in the face of something which must be brought to light as a

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<sup>37</sup> See CPR B158, “I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination.”

<sup>38</sup> Heidegger also points out the pure *ego* is the Kantian “*Personalitas psychologica*”—the personality in the formal sense. Heidegger points out the Neo-Kantian, e.g. Rickert’s, epistemological understanding of the logical *ego* as the “logical abstraction” is only a misinterpretation. Rather, the Kantian “logical *ego*” only stands for the opposition to “intuitive”. It is being conscious as the spontaneity of thought only by transcendental apperception of the *transcendental ego*—the “logical subject” (CPR B407). This “logical *ego*” is not a logical abstraction that is universal and nameless as in Rickert view. Rather, since it is known to itself as its own. Heidegger said that “It pertains to egohood that the *ego* is always mine. A

theme and a principle if the expression 'Being' is to have any demonstrable meaning" (BT 45). Thus, he fails to give an ontology of Dasein or the subjectivity of the subject. Kant's contribution of the paralogism is only recognized as a negative criticism that is not even a positive preparation for the questioning of the selfhood of the *ego*.

### 3. Kant's return to the *res cogitans*

By settling the phenomenal content of the *ego* is the "I think" rather than an "I", Kant also establishes the "I think" in the Cartesian tradition of *res cogitans*. Kant says, "I distinguish my own existence, as that of a thinking thing, from other things outside me (which include my body)" (CPR B408). The interpretation of the "things outside of me" shows that Kant gets into the same problem concerning the difference between *res cogitans* and the *res extensa* as Descartes did.

Heidegger criticizes Kant for his insufficiency of differentiating the Being of Dasein and the Being of the present-at-hand. Dasein is also regarded as something present-at-hand. In this line of thinking, Heidegger thinks that Kant's "I think" is only another Cartesian *cogito* that the *ego* is cut off from its world. Thus, the criticism is not focus on the proof itself but on the ontological presupposition that Dasein is just a present-at-hand. We shall discuss Heidegger's criticism in two points: (a) the indeterminacy of the *ego* as *subjectum*; (b) the ontological inadequacy of omission of the world.

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nameless *ego* is an absurdity" (BP 130).



### *a. The indeterminacy of the Being of res cogitans*

Kant states that the *ego* cannot be determined by categories and is not a “substance”. It is rather a “logical subject” that it is an “I combine”. However, in all kinds of combining, this ‘subject’ always underlies. It is the *hypokeimenon*—the *subjectum*—that is present for determinations. Since this logical subject cannot be determined by categories to be an I-substance, Kant only determine the subject, like Descartes does, a thinking thing (*res cogitans*) (see CPR B409). So, the Kantian subject, just like Heidegger’s reproach to Descartes, is built on the indifference to Dasein’s ontological difference from the other entities, and the Being of this entity is, again, left undetermined.

However, Heidegger thinks that the Kantian *ego* is more sophisticated than the Cartesian *res cogitans*. He points out that Kant’s *ego* has a threefold structure of the person: the transcendental person (self-consciousness), psychological (logical) person and the moral person. Heidegger thinks that the unity of the transcendental and the psychological person determines the concept of rational personality. Nevertheless, the moral person is the center of the personality that includes the former two concepts. He thinks that the moral person is the “personality proper” (BP 132). We shall not go into detail of this interpretation, but we shall only discuss one point that why Heidegger thinks Kant falls back to the tradition.

In §13 of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger declares that “Kant’s interpretation of the phenomenon of respect [*Achtung*] is probably the most brilliant phenomenological analytic of the phenomenon of morality that we have from him” (BP 133). In the Heideggerian interpretation, “respect” is the essential moral self-consciousness. It is different from the theoretical “I think

myself". It is rather the "I feel my existence". That moral feeling is "a making manifest of the *ego* in its non-sensible character, a revealing of itself as an acting entity" (BP 133). Respect is a self-subjection to the moral law. It is the active *ego*'s respect for itself as the self, which is not understood by means of self-conceit, and self-love. Heidegger quotes from Kant that, "respect always goes to person alone, never to things" (BP 135). Heidegger says,

I subject myself in respect for the law to my own self as the free self. in this subjection of myself I am manifest to myself; I am as I myself. The question is, As what or, more precisely, as *who*? (BP 135).

Moreover, Heidegger thinks that the self-subjection, "in conformity with the content of that to which I subject myself and for which I have a feeling in my respect, is at the same time a self-elevation as a becoming self-manifest in my ownmost dignity" (BP 136). In respect, the "I" is the end in myself. Heidegger continues:

Man exists as an end in himself; he is never a means, not even a means for God; before God, he is his own end. From this, from the ontological characterization of the entity that is not only viewed by others as an end and taken as an end but exists objectively—actually—as an end, the proper ontological meaning of the moral person becomes clear. The moral person exists as its own end; it is itself an end.

Only thus is the *basis* gained for distinguishing *ontologically entities that are egos* and *entities that are not egos*, between *subject* and *object*, and *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (BP 138).



In this interpretation, Heidegger thinks that Kant is different from Descartes because he raises a problem of ontological difference between person (Dasein) and nature (thing, *Sache*). The person is only "I myself" that is responsible to the question of "who" under the moral law. Heidegger will later interpret the Kantian moral *ego* in terms of the Being of Dasein as "for-the-sake-of" [*Umwillen*] itself. However, we shall not go into the detail of this interpretation. We point out only that Heidegger thinks that Kant has made an essential breakthrough from the tradition to reinforce the elevation of the modern subject. With the awareness of the ontological difference, Kant is distinguished from Descartes' indifferent to the mode of Being of the *res*.

However, Heidegger contends that Kant, even though he points out the ontological constitution of the human Dasein, he still leaves the question of Being unanswered. He says,

But does this clarify the Dasein's way of Being? Has the attempt even been made to show how the Dasein's mode of Being is determined with regard to its being constituted by purposiveness? We seek in vain for an elucidation of this questioning Kant, and indeed even for the question itself (BP 141).

Thus, the analytic of the finality of the person is still a not enough to elucidate the ontological constitution of the *ego*. The question of Being of Dasein does not occur in Kant's work. He thinks, after all the effort of determining the person as the end of itself, it is disappointing that Kant still expresses the Being of person and the Being of things with the same word, "existence". In a harsh tone, Heidegger said, it is "Striking" (BP 147). Instead of questioning the Being of

person, Kant only presupposes both the person—“*res cogitans*”—and the *res extensa* are finite entities. By doing so, Kant presupposes the same basic ontological these of Descartes. Kant falls back to the tradition of Medieval and the Greek ontology that Being is determined in its createdness. In this sense, although Kant has succeeded in refuting the use of categories to determine the *ego* as a “substance”, at the end, Kant is criticized of following the idea of “*hypokeimenon*” to determine the *ego* as subject [*Subjectum*] again. Heidegger says:

[Kant] takes this “I” as subject again, and he does so in a sense which is ontologically inappropriate. For the ontological concept of the subject characterizes not the Selfhood of the “I” *qua* Self, but the selfsameness and steadiness of something that is always present-at-hand. To define the “I” as ‘subject’ means to regard it as something always present-at-hand. The Being of the “I” is understood as the Reality of the *res cogitans*.

But how does it come about that while the “I think” gives Kant a genuine phenomenal starting point, he cannot exploit it ontologically, and has to fall back on the ‘subject’—that is to say, something *substantial*? (BT 367).

Heidegger thinks that the subject in the sense of *hypokeimenon* is only a steady, selfsame present-at-hand: it stresses on the permanent presence of the logical subject in consciousness. However, the ontological characteristics of the person as a self-subjection to the moral law, the end to itself are covered up. Thus, the *hypokeimenon* does not exhibit the Selfhood of the “I” *qua* Self. It is only a way



of determining the Being of the present-at-hand in terms of substantiality—a *res cogitans*. Heidegger criticizes:

Yet even though in theory he has denied that the ontical foundations of the ontology of the substantial apply to the “I”, he still slips back into *this same* inappropriate ontology (BT 266).

***b. The omission of the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world***

Heidegger regards the “I think” insufficient to resolve the problem of the existence of the external world. Rather, it falls back in the tradition that presupposes both the external world and *ego* as present-at-hand. Dasein, as Being-in-the-world is not a worldless subject. The isolated I as the consciousness does not resolve the “scandal of philosophy” not because Kant’s proof is inadequate, “but that the kind of Being of the entity which does the proving and makes request has *not been made finite enough*” (BT 249). Thus, Kant is criticized that though he tries to establish the phenomenon of saying “I” as “I think”, he “has done so without starting with the ‘I think’ itself with its full essential content as an “I think something” (BT 367). This “I think something” is indeed the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world.

Such a result is criticized to be contradiction of Kant’s refutation of the idealism (BT 247). Kant shows how intricate the question of the existence of the external world is and how what one wants to prove gets muddled with what one does prove and with the means whereby the proof is carried out. Kant calls it

“scandal of philosophy and of human reason in general”<sup>39</sup>. Kant shows that there is still no cogent proof for the “Dasein of things outside of us” which will put an end to skepticism. Kant thinks that “The mere consciousness of my own Dasein—a consciousness which, however, is empirical in character—proves the Dasein of objects in the space outside of me”.<sup>40</sup>

Kant’s in presupposing both the distinction “in me” and the “outside of me”, and also the connection between them is considered “correct”. However, he criticizes that “[Kant] is incorrect from the standpoint of the tendency of his proof” (BT 248). This tendency is shown by his uses of the term “Dasein”, which means presence-at-hand [*Vorhandenheit*] in Heidegger’s interpretation (see BT 247). Heidegger thinks, that is “one thing remains striking. Kant speaks of the *existence [Dasein] of the person* as he does of the *existence of a thing [Ding]*” (BP 147).

Heidegger points out that as long as the Being of Dasein and the “external world” are presupposed as present-at-hand, the “scandal of philosophy” will continue, and the proof of the existence of the external world will be expected and attempted to demonstrate again and again (BT 249). Even if Kant states the doctrine that the subject must presuppose and indeed always does unconsciously presuppose the presence-at-hand of the external world, he is still starting with of the external world. The whole problem of the existence of the external world is set on the omission of the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world (BT 249).

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<sup>39</sup> See BT 247, Heidegger’s quotation from a note in the Preface of *Critique of Pure Reason*.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from BT 247, Heidegger’s quote from CPR B275.



Therefore, although Kant shows that this “I think” as consciousness always accompanies empirical representations, he does not provide a definite determination of the “accompanying” or the way of Being of the *ego*. Heidegger says, “It has not been demonstrated the sort of thing which gets established about the Being-present-at-hand-together” of the things outside me and the thing “in me” (see BT 248-9).

Heidegger thinks that the Kantian or the traditional metaphysics is insufficient to resolve the problem of existence of the world. It is the task of the Dasein analytic to disclose the “full essential content” of the phenomenon of the “saying ‘I’” that this phenomenon is not merely an “I think”, but an “I think something” (BT 367-8). Heidegger says,

For even the “I think” is not definite enough ontologically as a starting-point, because the “something” remains indefinite. If by this “something” we understand an entity *within-the-world*, then it tacitly implies that the *world* has been presupposed; and this very phenomenon of the world co-determines the state of Being of the “I”, if indeed it is to be possible for the “I” to be something like an “I think something” (BT 368).

In the phenomenon of “I think something”, the “I” and the “something” are ontologically related in the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world. None of them is present-at-hand. The “something” would be interpreted as the ready-to-hand [*Zuhanden*] that is not an object of representation. Rather, it is always encountered as a tool for use. The “I” that Dasein have in view, is not a subject

but the Being-in-the-world. Thus, whenever Dasein expresses “I am”, it actually expresses itself as an “I-am-in-a-world” (368 [321]).

#### **D. Conclusion**

Our conclusion is that through the confrontation of Descartes and Kant, Heidegger arrives at the phenomenologically ground of the answer to the question of “who” of Dasein. The answer to the question “who” is not just a “I am”, but “I am in the world”. Heidegger thinks that only when the phenomenon of saying “I” is rendered as an “I-am-in-the-world”, can the genuine phenomenal content of saying “I” be disclosed. Hence, only then can the answer be prepared for discussion.

Taking *ego* as the *res cogitans* is a covering up of the question of Being by the investigation of an other entity. Heidegger stresses that Being is different from an entity. Referring the ontological determination of *ego* as a creation of God is only a disguise of the inability to discriminate God and substance and the indetermination of the meaning of “substance”. Heidegger thinks that Descartes, the founder of the Modern philosophy who declares that “I am” as the first unshakable truth, fails to determine the *ego* as an ontologically distinct subject.

Comparing with Heidegger’s reproaches on Descartes, Kant, however, is interpreted in a more positive manner. Heidegger thinks that Kant is capable to exhibit the phenomenon of saying “I am” into the “I think”. Kant succeeds in refuting the paralogisms of determining *ego* as a substance. Kant is “correct” in refusing the determination of *ego* with ontical experiences. However, Heidegger



criticizes that Kant falls back in the tradition of seeing the "I" as a logical subject in the sense of *hypokeimenon* "again".

The ultimate problem for Kant and Descartes is that they have mistaken the *ego* as a present-at-hand. Under this ontological presumption, the problem of external world cannot be settled. Moreover, the ontological difference of Dasein is neglected. Heidegger thinks that Kant has almost succeeded to establish a full exhibition of saying "I". However, the representation of thing "outside of me" and the cognition of the logical subject "I" are all representations in terms of present-at-hand. Heidegger criticizes that Kant does not see that Dasein is a Being-in-the-world. The phenomenon of the world and the phenomenon of saying "I" are rooted in Dasein's Being. Heidegger points out that whenever Dasein is an "I think" it is already an "I think something". Only if the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world is correctly understood, can one understand that Dasein and the intraworldly entities are phenomenological connected. Heidegger says:

If, in the ontology of Dasein, we "take our departure" from a worldless "I" in order to provide this "I" with an Object and an ontologically baseless relation to that Object, then we have presumed not too much, but *too little* (BT 363).

Heidegger thinks Kant and Descartes have completely overlooked the phenomenon of the world, which is in fact an existential structure of Dasein. A correct understanding of Dasein's self-expression as "I am in the world" can only be established in the understanding of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world. The "world" is presumed in the Being of Dasein that as long as it is, it is not an

isolated or worldless subject. Rather, it is already “in” a world. The meaning of “in” or Being-in the world will be explicated in the next chapter.

Therefore, the question of “who” of Dasein is to be rendered not as an “I”, but an “I-am-in-the-world”. Heidegger says:

But if the Self is conceived “only” as a way of Being of this entity, this seems tantamount to volatilizing the real “core” of Dasein. Any apprehensiveness however which one may have about this gets its nourishment from the perverse assumption that the entity in question has at bottom the kind of Being which belongs to something present-at-hand, even if one is far from attributing it the solidity of an occurrent corporeal thing. Yet man’s “*substance*” is not spirit as a synthesis of soul and body; it is rather *existence* (BT 153).

In the above discussion, we have already seen how Heidegger “volatilizes” the question of *ego* of the tradition of Kant and Descartes who in fact represent the entire history of philosophy. At the end, Dasein can only be explicated in its Being (existence), not a substance.



## Chapter III

### The everyday “I”—so close yet far away

#### *The analytic of the “I-am-in-the-world”*

#### **A. Introduction**

The phenomenological Interpretation of Dasein’s whoness in *Being and Time* takes a distinctive approach by making a doubt on the obviousness [*Selbstverständlichkeit*] of the answer, “I am this Dasein”. Heidegger states, “*Ontically, of course, Dasein is not only close to us—even that which is closest: we are it, each of us, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest*” (BT 36). Heidegger contends that the obviously “given” “I” is in fact ontologically undetermined. He thinks that the ontical obviousness of the fact that Dasein in each case mine, covers up the possibility of the ontological problematic of the whoness of Dasein. Not only so, in the analytic of the everydayness, the ontically obvious “I” is demonstrated to be “indefinite and empty” (BT 368). This chapter aims at an explication of how and why the above quote can work out an ontological description of Dasein can be worked out.

Since the ontical certitude of the givenness of the I is under question, how can the Dasein analytic be undertaken to reveal the phenomenon of Dasein which says always “I am it”? Heidegger states that although “Dasein is ontically ‘closest’ to itself and ontological farthest”, and “pre-ontologically it is surely not

a stranger” (BT 37). The access to the phenomenon of Dasein is then gained from Dasein’s “pre-ontological” proximity to itself.

In *Being and Time*, this pre-ontological way of expressing its mineness is called “everydayness” [*Alltäglichkeit*]. “Everydayness” does not stand for the primitive state of the Being of Dasein (§11). Rather, it is the existential structure of Dasein which is proximally and for the most part [*zunächst und zumeist*] absorbed in its world because Dasein is a Being-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-sein*].

In the phenomenological Interpretation of the Being-in-the-world, what is “closest” to Dasein is the environment—the “world”. The everyday Dasein is proximally and for the most part “absorbed” in the world. Dasein’s understanding of its own Self is found in the way that it comports itself according to the world. To render this ontological structure of Being-in-the-world, we shall elucidate the meaning of “world” in two aspects: the “work-world” [*Werk-welt*] and the “with-world” [*Mitwelt*].

The work-world reveals that Dasein is always closest to its concern, its world. What comes to Dasein as its closest is the work. The structure of work-world opens Dasein’s primordial relationship of Being to the Being of readiness-to-hand. Ontically, there is always a structure of “in-order-to” that governs Dasein’s letting-something-be-involved to be equipment. Ontologically, in the understanding of the in-order-to’s of the equipment, Dasein always has itself in view. Even though it is only an existentiell mode of self-understanding, Dasein is always determined as something that which has its Being as an issue. Since what is closest to Dasein in the work-world is the equipment, we shall explicate how the equipment become “close” to Dasein. What is “close by” or “here” for Dasein



is only an existential description of Dasein's spatiality. Bringing something close (de-severant [*Ent-fernung*]) is again a way of Being-in in the world of concern. Thus, the "I-here" do not have the metaphysical primacy. Indeed, if Dasein expresses itself as the "I-here", it only reveals that Dasein is absorbed in its world.

In the existential analytic of the with-world, Heidegger understands Dasein as a Being-with. That the Others are "there" in Dasein's own world is its ontological determination. It signifies that the world is not a personal-world but a common world. Dasein and the Others are there in the one world. By the term "Others", Heidegger does not mean "everyone else but me—those over against whom the 'I' stands out" (BT 54). This "Other" is not definite. Indeed, in its everydayness, the Dasein itself is "Others". Heidegger calls this way of everyday being the Others the "They" [*da Man*]. In Dasein's everydayness, the "who" is not an "I myself" but the "They-self" [*das Man-selbst*] (BT 167). Thus, Heidegger says, "Proximally, it is not 'I', in the sense of my own Self, that 'am', but rather the Others, whose way is that of the 'They'" (BT 167).

Dasein's closest way of Being is not the "I" but the "They". It signifies that not only that ontologically the I is not determined and farthest, but also that the ontical obviousness of the I is still concealed.

### ***B. Dasein's everyday work-world***

This section is a study of Dasein's everydayness in terms of the work-world [*Werkwelt*]. It is related to our question of who of Dasein because in its everydayness, Dasein always finds itself being along with the equipment when

Dasein is at work (BT 153). "Everydayness" is an ontological structure that characterizes Dasein's Being as "Being-in-the-world". In §71, Heidegger explains that "Everydayness" "stands for that way of existing in which Dasein maintains itself "every day" [*alle Tage*]; it is "a definite 'how' of existence by which Dasein is dominated through and through 'for life'" [*zeitlebens*] (BT 422).

The ontological structure of the work-world dominates Dasein's everydayness. This work-world is not something being imposed on Dasein. Rather, it is the environment according to which, Dasein behaves (comports) itself [*sich verhält*]. It implies a specific everyday way of Being of Dasein that Dasein concerns itself with the entity it encounters at work. An entity within-the-world is ontically understood<sup>41</sup> as equipment. The ontological explication of Dasein's self-understanding shows that the disclosedness of the Being of equipment as involvement [*Bewandtnis*] also reveals Dasein's own situatedness in the work-world.

The "world" that is rendered in terms of the work-world is a structure of Dasein's ontological self-understanding. Therefore, the world is interpreted as an existentiale of Dasein. The world is not external to Dasein but it is Dasein's ontological situatedness in the totality of involvement. The entities as ready-to-hand are proximally encountered in their uses: Dasein does not encounter the

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<sup>41</sup> We should bear in mind that "understanding" in the Heideggerian context has nothing to do with "representation", "theoretical grasping". This mode of "knowing" is meant to grasp the essence or property of the present-at-hands. Present-at-hand is neither the mode of Being of Dasein nor the equipment. Heidegger always use the term "understanding" [*verstehen*], '*Verstand*', or '*Verständnis*' for the phenomenological sense of "disclosing" [*Erschliessen*].



computer as a computer-in-itself; Dasein assigns the significance of the computer as a reference [*Verweisung*] to what it is used for. Hence, the world is a “referential totality” wherein Dasein makes sense of the ready-to-hand in the in-order-to [*Um-zu*] structure. Heidegger calls it the “ontical-existential” meaning of the world.

On the other hand, Dasein’s everydayness is “the structure of existentiality lies *a priori*. And here too, Dasein’s Being is an issue for it in a definite way” (BT 69). In the explication of the structure of the world as the “totality of involvement”, the ontological formal indication of “existence” is concretized by the exhibition of Dasein’s “comportment” [*Verhalten*] in the work-world. An ontological analytic of the work-world is not merely a necessary step for the answering to Dasein’s “who” in its everydayness. It is important for the explication of Dasein’s existence.

### 1. The Heideggerian concept of the “world”

The existential analytic of Dasein’s everydayness is based on Dasein’s ontological constitution as Being-in-the-world. “World” is an *existentiale* of Dasein (BT 92). Heidegger says, “Dasein is its world existingly” (BT 416); and furthermore, “if no Dasein exists, no world is ‘there’ either” (BT 417). He lists out four meanings of the concept of “world”. But we shall only discuss the two of them to clarify Heidegger’s meaning of the work-world:

1. “World” is used as an ontical concept, and signifies the totality of those entities which can be present-at-hand within the world; and

3. "World" can be understood in another ontical sense—not, however, as those entities which Dasein essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather as that "*wherein*" a factual Dasein as such can be said to "live". "World" has here a pre-ontological existentiell signification. Here again there are different possibilities: "world" may stand for the "public" we-world, or one's "own" closest (domestic) environment (BT 93).

Conceiving the "world" as the "sum total" of things present-at-hand is a "ordinary pre-philosophical concept" (BP 165-6). The world traditionally means "nature", "things" and the "universe of entities". However, "world" as the "totality of intrawordly entities presupposes world in the phenomenological sense that has yet to be defined" (BP 166).

Tracing back to the Ancient Greeks philosophy, the ideas of "totality" and "world" have been renewed. Heidegger thinks that the concept of "world" is primarily rooted in the Greek expression "*kosmos*" (MFL 171). "*Kosmos*" does not mean entities present-at-hand; it does not at all mean entities themselves and is not a name for them. Rather, he states that "*kosmos*" refers to the "condition" [*Zustand*]; *kosmos* is the term for the mode of Being [*Weise zu sein*]. It is the "how" of totality. Therefore, the meaning of the concept of "world" has from the outset of ancient philosophy, an ontological significance (ibid.). "Totality" is still the main characteristic of the "world" in the Heideggerian context. However, the question of totality is "*human Dasein's relationship to entities in its totality*".<sup>42</sup> "Totality" neither depends on the entities within the world, nor does it signify the

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<sup>42</sup> *The Essence of Reason*, pp. 82-83.



“sum total” of things. “Totality” denotes the existence of Dasein: it is the question how Dasein “free” the Being of entities as ready-to-hand, as equipment [Zeug] and as involvement [Bewandtnis]. The world is the “wherein” of Dasein. As a “wherein” that Dasein “lives”, the world is rendered in Dasein’s everydayness. It is explicated at two levels: (i) on the pre-ontological existentiell level that Dasein encounters other entities within-the-world; which is dominated by the “work”. (ii) On the ontologico-existential level, the world is a structure of existence (*existentiale*) of Dasein.

## 2. The ontico-existentiell explication of Dasein’s work-world

Dasein’s closest everyday “world” is a “work-world” [*Werkwelt*] (BT 101). It is constituted by Dasein’s ontico-existentiell understanding the way of the Being of Dasein, which Heidegger terms as “concern” [*Besorge*]. “Concern” is the way of Dasein’s dealings [*Umgang*] in the world “which manipulates things and puts them into use” (BT 95). Everything within the world is discovered under the concern [*Besorge*] of getting the work done. As we have discussed in the last chapter, the entities within-the-world are primarily disclosed as “equipment” and “ready-to-hand”. The “work-world”, Heidegger states, is the “referential totality within which the equipment is encountered” (BT 99).

How does Dasein’s using the ready-to-hands at work [*in Arbeit*] constitute it everyday “world”—the totality of entity? The entities that are encountered within-the-world are not primordially grasped as occurring things. They are encountered as tools for Dasein’s use. For example, a hammer shows itself as equipment which is ready-to-hand for making the shoes. However, the usability

of equipment discloses not merely one single piece of ready-to-hand in itself. In the moment that the equipment is being encountered, the world as a whole, in its totality is being opened up to Dasein.

Hence, a pair of shoes does not stand by itself. The production itself is a using of something for something. In this case, the pair of shoes is being produced for wearing. In reference to the "work", the materials: leather, thread, needles, and the likes are encountered. Furthermore the leather refers animal, whereas the hammer discloses the hammer manufacturers, the country of fabrication, the seller and the like. Similarly, the pair of shoes being produced will be sold to a customer: it is made to fit his or her feet, he or she "is" already there along with the pair of shoes.

When one ready-to-hand is being encountered in this "work-world", references and assignment of meanings show themselves right immediately to Dasein. It is because the hammer, the pair of shoes, the animal and the customer do not show themselves as things themselves. They are not merely "related" to one another. They are being disclosed at once in the use of the hammer in the structure of their relatedness. Therefore, Dasein's everyday encountering to a "work" is always a disclosure of the world as a referential totality.

In the above explication of the work-world, we see that the entities within-the-world are encountered as ready-to-hand. The Being of the entities that are encountered in the work-world is thus readiness-to-hand. This way of the Being of ready-to-hand manifests not only itself but also the world as the referential totality as a whole. The Being of ready-to-hand has therefore a specific ontological relationship to Dasein's Being and Dasein's world.



### 3. The ontologico-existential explanation of worldhood

From the above discussion, the Being of entities within-the-world is primordially discovered by Dasein as “readiness-to-hand”. The world is proximally dominated by “work” and it is the referential totality of the ready-to-hand. In Heidegger’s description, a hammer makes sense by referring to nails; the hammering makes sense by the production of shoes; hammer, nails, shoes are “there” within the totality of reference. That is the ontico-existential meaning of the world. The Being of the ready-to-hand is freed (disclosed) as *readiness-to-hand* for Dasein. Heidegger says:

The “wherein” [*Worin*] of an act of understanding of which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvement [*Bewandtnis*]; and this “wherein” is the phenomenon of world (BT 119).

The phenomenon of world is the “wherein”. What does it mean? The “wherein” has to be a description of something “in” something. It signifies that Dasein is “in” the world. Therefore, the phenomenon of the world as a “wherein” is meant to describe the way of the Being of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world. The world is not only a “Dasein’s world”, but also the ontological structure of Dasein.

In §4, Heidegger stated that the characteristic of Dasein is that Being is always an issue for Dasein. In this ontological characteristic, Dasein is shown to have an understanding of Being. But this is only a formal indication of Dasein. The explication of the phenomenon of world is a concretization of this formal indication: Dasein’s everyday dealings with the equipment and the understands the Being of equipment as “involvement” [*Bewandtnis*].

In *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, Kisiel points out that “*Bewandtnis*” applies specifically to the Being of ready-to-hands. With the suffix “-sis”, *Bewandtnis* is thereby meant to formalize the ontological sense of their intentional state or quality of readiness-to-hand: the hammer is prepared to hammer, the knife is equipped to cut.<sup>43</sup> Heidegger says, “if something has an involvement, this implies letting it be involved in something” (BT 115). The Being of equipment is disclosed to Dasein in the using. Heidegger says that each single piece of equipment carries its own equipmental contexture along with it and it is this equipment only with regard to that contexture (BP 292). Equipment (ready-to-hand) has a Being of involvement because it has always been referred to a certain activity or purpose “in” something.

Kisiel points out that the German “*Be-wenden*” suggests more of a “dynamic stasis”: a kind of turning in place, or verve potentializing the situation, the way the world turns, etc. It has an implication of “situatedness”. In *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger refers the idea of *Bewandtnis* to “the child’s question, ‘what is this thing?’” (HCT 260) Answering this question to the child, one must “bring out the referential correlation accessible at any given time” (ibid.). Thus, the answer must explain “what it is used for, defining what one finds in terms of what one does with it” (ibid.). “It is for painting” is a most efficient definition of a crayon. Heidegger thinks that this “definition and interpretation” at the same time make reference to Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, to Dasein’s preoccupation of the “work”. The crayon “is understood only when

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<sup>43</sup> Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, California: University of California Press, 1993, p.389.



one has entered into the standing [*Bewandtnis*] which the environmental thing has" (HCT 261).<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the crayon as a piece of equipment is then understood in its involvement. In *Being and Time*, Dasein's understanding of the Being of equipment as involvement is described as Dasein's relating itself to the equipment. This self-relating is a "letting something be involved" [*Bewendenlassen*] (BT 117). Ontically speaking, it signifies that factual Dasein "let something ready-to-hand be [*sein lassen*] so-and-so as it is already and in order that it be such" (ibid.). This primordial understanding of the equipment is a "hermeneutic 'as,'" that manifests before the verbal appresentation, the "apophantical 'as.'"<sup>45</sup>

The understanding of the involvement of equipment is "hermeneutical" because it is always rooted in Dasein's self-understanding of its Being. Therefore, disclosing the Being of equipment is indeed a manifestation of Dasein's existence. To explain this ontological relation, Heidegger has given an example:

That in which it [an equipment] is involved is the "towards-which" [*das Wozu*] of servicability, and the "for-which" [*Wofür*] of usability. With the "towards-which" of serviceability there can again be an involvement: *with* this thing, for instance, which is ready-to-hand, and

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<sup>44</sup> As it is pointed out by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson in the translators' note on BT 115, that there is no adequate English word for the German "*Bewandtnis*" and *Bewenden*". According to his studies on Heidegger, Theodore Kisiel translates "*Bewandtnis*" of *The History of the Concept of Time* into "standing". Even so, For the sake of making consistent, we shall follow Macquarrie and Robinson's translation, i.e. "involvement" for "*Bewandtnis*". (The reason of translating "*Bewandtnis*" into "standing" in *HCT*, see Kisiel (1993): 389.)

<sup>45</sup> Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, p. 391.

which we accordingly call a “hammer”, there is an involvement in making something fast; with making something fast, there is an involvement in protection against bad weather; and this protection “is” for the sake of [*um-willen*] providing shelter for Dasein—that is to say, for the sake of a possibility of Dasein’s Being (BT 116).

When Dasein uses the hammer, it is disclosed as a piece of equipment and its Being is “involvement”. The hammer is a equipment for a “towards-which”. Its involvement is not determined on its own account. Rather, the equipment is determined as a piece of equipment because the “towards-which” is already in view. But the “towards-which” is in turn another equipment for other towards-which’s sake. The totality of involvement is in fact under the contextual structure of “in-order-to”. A hammer is let to be involved in the hammer for the sake of ... and at the end, all in-order-to are for the sake of Dasein itself. Heidegger describes that Dasein is the final “towards-which”; hence the understanding of the “work-world” is ontologically constituted: “in its Being, that very Being is essentially an *issue*” (BT 117).

It should be noted that the description that Dasein as the final or the primarily “towards-which” of understanding of the Being of involvement is no longer an ontical description. It describes the Being of Dasein as the for-the-sake-of-which [*Umwillen*] in its understanding of the Being of other entities. In explicating the relation between the structure of involvement and Dasein’s Being, Kiesel has given a helpful analytic of Heidegger’s using of the prefix “*Be-*” of the *Bewandtnis*: “*Be-*” signifies a way of finding of Dasein’s own facticity out of the



contextual immediacy.<sup>46</sup> Hence, we see that "*Bewandtnis*" does not denote that an equipment is "involved" in something but it is "let be involved" for Dasein's concern. In this structure, who is being involved in something (the work) is indeed Dasein itself. Likewise, what is situated in the equipmental context is not the equipment but Dasein itself. The ontologico-existential description of the totality of involvement then signifies that in understanding of the Being of equipment, Dasein has already a self-understanding beforehand. Not only so, in the understanding of involvement, Dasein is at the same time open to itself for the possibility of itself. The understanding that is already there is not a static "knowledge" but a continuous disclosing through Dasein's existing in the work-world.

The totality of equipment is not "formed" by external adding-up of affairs and work. It is Dasein's own situatedness in the work-world in its everydayness. Letting something be involved is then a way that something "concern my Dasein". However, this understanding of its own situatedness is only a pre-ontological understanding according to its ontical potentiality-for-Being. It is Dasein's ontological structure of "comportment" [*Verhalten*].

#### **4. The work-world and the lack of privilege of Dasein's I-here**

In the above discussion, we have explicated the phenomenon of world in Dasein's everydayness. In terms of Dasein's concern, its relatedness to the equipment is discussed. This phenomenon of Dasein manifests Dasein's existence

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<sup>46</sup> Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, p. 392

in its existentiell understanding of its own Being. According to the understanding of the totality of involvement and its potentiality-for-Being, Dasein always concerns itself in the context of work in its everydayness.

We must refer back to our aim of exposition of Heidegger's question on the "who" of Dasein. The Interpretation of the world contributes to the answering to the question of "who" of Dasein in the way that it clarifies the structure of everydayness. The work-world is the "wherein" that Dasein proximally dwelling. The "wherein" does not mean a physical spatiality. Rather, it is an ontologico-existential situatedness of Dasein. In its everyday existentiell understanding, Dasein's comportment manifests Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of the world as its "wherein".

In its comportment to the work-world, Dasein does not thematize its "who". However, it Being-a-Self that manifests itself. One example may be illustrated as the whole relation of the work-world and Dasein's Self: I open the door because it is time to go out for the bus. The door, the lock, the corridor and the elevator are disclosed as equipment. In addition, I have to attend a meeting and have to arrive on time. In every item encountered in the totality of involvement, the "I" emerges not as a theoretical subject, the "I" does not emerge as something a problematic. It is just the "one" who has to attend the meeting on time.

Comportment characterizes Dasein as a Being-in-the-world. Also, it characterizes the powerful domination of work in Dasein's everydayness. Dasein "finds itself" at work. Heidegger emphasizes:

This elemental worldly kind of encountering, which belongs to Dasein and is closest to it, goes so far that even one's *own* Dasein becomes



something that it can itself proximally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally “come across” only when it *looks away* from “Experience” and the “center of its actions”, or does not as yet “see” them at. Dasein finds itself proximally in *what* it does, uses, expects, avoids—in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally *concerned* (BT 155).

Moreover, even if Dasein addresses itself as the “I here”, this locative personal designation must be understood in terms of Dasein’s spatiality. The linkage of Dasein’s self-addressing as the I-here and spatiality is borrowed from W. von Humboldt. In his linguistic analytic, von Humboldt finds that in some languages, the “I” is expressed by the “here”, “you” by “there” and “he” by “yonder”. In Heidegger’s view, von Humboldt’s insight of linking up the pronouns with the spatial adverbs is beyond the level of Linguistics (BT 155). For instance, Heidegger has incorporated von Humboldt’s insight into Dasein’s existential spatiality to explain the existential relationship between Dasein and the ready-to-hand and that of Dasein and the Others.

Heidegger thinks that the “here”, “there”, and “yonder” are primarily not merely ways of designating the location of presence-at-hand. They are the characteristics of Dasein’s primordial spatiality. He thinks that “these supposedly locative adverbs are Dasein-designations; they have a signification which is authentically existential” (BT 156). Heidegger states:

Dasein understands its “here” [*Hier*] in terms of its environmental “yonder” [*Dort*]. The “here” does not mean the ‘where’ of something present-at-hand, but rather the “whereat” [*Wobei*] of a de-severant

Being-alongside, together with this de-severance [*Ent-fernung*] (BT 142).

“Deseverance” [*Ent-fernung*] is the kind of Being which Dasein has with regard to its Being-in-the-world. The word “deseverant” has a signification which is active and transitive (BT 139). Heidegger’s “*Ent-fernung*” is a play of word. By dividing up the “*Entfernung*” (“distance” or “removing”) into “*Ent-*” (“dis-” or “removing”) and “*fern*” (“far”), the new term has an opposite significant to the original word: it means “to make the farness vanish”, i.e. “bringing something close” (ibid.). Heidegger says, “Dasein is essentially de-severant” (ibid.). It means that Dasein lets any entity be encountered close by as the entity which it is. The existential meaning of bringing something close by is always a circumspective bringing-close: bringing something close by, in the sense of procuring it and putting it to hand.

In Dasein’s circumspective concern, the “distance” of something is not “measured” by its physical distance from Dasein as if they are two presence-at-hands. Circumspective concern describes something by “at a stone’s throw” or “a good walk”. Dasein’s own Being is always concerned in the bringing close of something ready-to-hand. That which is presumably “closest” is by no means that which is at the smallest distance “from us”. Heidegger’s example: the street beneath my feet is farther remote than the acquaintance whom I encounter “on the street” at a “remoteness” [*Entfernung*] of twenty paces when one is taking such a walk (BT 141-142). Thus, the existential meaning of “closeness” and “farness” is not an “objective” distance and it is not “subjective” either. The closeness and farness is measured with Dasein’s involvement: whether one’s



Dasein finds itself “closer” related to something, or whether it concerns Dasein’s Being more.

The Dasein is not an I-here or a bodily I-thing. Heidegger says:

Dasein understands its “here” in terms of its environmental “yonder”. The “here” does not mean the “where” of something present-at-hand, but rather the “wher-at” of a desseverance with its spatiality, is proximally never here but yonder; “here” only in the way in which it interprets its concernful Being-towards in terms of what is ready-to-hand yonder (BT 142).

In other words, Dasein is always stepped beyond itself towards the world of concern. It is not its “here” because it is driven towards, or absorbed in, its concern. Certainly, this “not its here” does not mean that Dasein is not “in its body”. But it is to be understood existentially as that which is pre-occupied by its work. Since the ready-to-hand is the “yonder”, Dasein in its concern is primarily absorbed in its relation to the yonder. According to the work-world, what is primarily encountered is not the “here myself” but the ready-to-hand that is useful to my Dasein. Referring back to the totality of reference, Dasein then finds itself within its work. Hence, Dasein’s understanding of its self as the I-here is always in terms of its work, the yonder.

### ***C. Dasein’s everyday with-world***

The “world” of Dasein is not only a work-world. It is also a “with-world” [*Mitwelt*] (BT 163). By this ontological characterization of the world, the Being

of everyday Dasein is determined as Being-with [*Mitsein*]. It is the co-original determination of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Dasein is not an isolated entity from its world. Rather, it is Being-in in the world wherein the Others are "with" them. The "world" is not a "subjective" world of my Dasein. It is a shared world. It is the world of Dasein and at the same time, the world of Others. There is no separation from Dasein's self-world to the with-world. Rather, "They are there with me in the one world" (HCT 240).

Ontically speaking, in the structure of involvement, the equipment always shows itself with the Others: the hammer is purchased at someone's shop; when I go to the meeting, I am expecting to see someone; even the strangest man I encounter on the road are in my world and is experienced as such in avoiding or passing each other by.

To clarify the meaning of Dasein's with-world, we shall focus on two points: (1) revealing Dasein as the Being-with and the world as a with-world through the explanation of the encountering of the Others. (2) However, there is a tension among Dasein's Being-with and its Being-a-Self. In everydayness, Dasein's Being-its-Self is thus taken away by the Others and its everyday Self is not itself but the "They" [*das Man*]. Proximally and for the most part, this "They-self" is the way that Dasein maintains itself in the everydayness. Therefore, through the explication of the "They", Heidegger arrives at the answer to Dasein's everyday "whoness". Heidegger explains, "Proximally, it is not 'I,' in the sense of my own Self, that 'am', but rather the Others, whose way is that of the 'They'" (BT 167). Our question why Heidegger thinks that the ontical closest "I" is in fact farthest to Dasein is answered.



## 1. The primacy of Dasein over the encountering of Other

Thus, the Others are also encountered “in” the world. The encountering of the Others is described a structure of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world as follow:

### *a. The Others are encountered within the world through the encountering of the equipment.*

“The expression ‘Dasein’, however, shows plainly that ‘in the first instance’ this entity is unrelated to Others, and that of course it can still be ‘with’ Others afterwards” (BT 156 [120]). Heidegger stresses that as a Being-in-the-world, Dasein proximally and for the most part discovers the ready-to-hand first. In the last quote, the “in the first instance” is put within quotation marks to signify that it does not have a chronological sense. The encountering of the Others is constituted by Dasein’s Being-in-the-world. The “wherein” of Dasein is primarily a work-world in which the totality of involvement and the totality of equipment are disclosed and the Others are encountered afterwards. In *The Basic problems of Phenomeonology*, Heidegger says, “the Dasein is also not first merely Being-with Others; instead, Being-with Other means Being-with-in-the-world” (BP 278).

Moreover, the Others are encountered through the ready-to-hand. For example: the Others are encountered as friends I want to meet, for whom I brought a present. When we see a boat anchored on the shore, it may belong to an acquaintance who is going to make a voyage. Even if it is a “boat which is strange to us”, it is still indicative to the Others. Thus, the Being of the Others is therefore determined as the characteristic of Dasein’s everydayness. In Dasein’s everydayness, Dasein is proximally and for the most part absorbed in the world

under concern. The Others are “there” with me in the world of concern (HCT 239).

***b. The ontological difference between the ready-to-hand and the Others***

The Being of the Others that Dasein encounters within the world is different from the Being of ready-to-hand. It is because the Others have the same kind of Being of Dasein. Heidegger calls the Being of Others “Dasein-with” [*Mitdasein*]. It signifies that the Others that they are “in” Dasein’s world by the way of Being-in-the-world (BT 154).

Dasein’s Being-towards the Others is called “solicitude” [*Fürsorge*]. In comparison to Dasein’s “concern” itself towards the ready-to-hand, solicitude describes Dasein’s relatedness to the Others; it is an existentials of Dasein as well. Heidegger says, even the “concern” with food and clothing, and the nursing of the sick body, are forms of solicitude (see BT 158). In addition, “Being-for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, not “ ‘mattering’ to one another” are possible ways of solicitude (ibid.). In whichever modes mentioned above, solicitude manifests as the state of Being of Dasein’s Being-with (BT 159).

***c. The Others are “in” the world by way of Being-in-the-world.***

In Dasein’s own world, each one of the Other is a Dasein, who is there too with every Dasein [*es ist auch und mit da*]. The word “with” [*mit*] is reserved to the relationship between Dasein and the Others. In fact, Heidegger said that the



“with” is something of the character of Dasein; the “too” means a sameness of Being as circumspective concerned Being-in-the-world. He stresses that “with” and “too” are to be understood *existentially* as an ontological description of Dasein (see BT 154).

The “with” signifies Dasein’s Being-in “in” a world that the Others are there “too”. The Others are within the totality of involvement of one’s own Dasein. Likewise, one’s own Dasein is also in the totality of involvement of the Others’ too. The Others are “there” in its world as long as Dasein exists. The encountering of the Others is “still oriented by that Dasein which is in each case one’s own” (BT 154). The “with” does not signify physical side-by-side-ness. Moreover, the world is indeed not exactly “Dasein’s world” only. It is a shared world—the “with-world” [*Mitwelt*] (BT 155).<sup>47</sup> Dasein’s Being-in in the world is essentially a Being-with [*Mitsein*].

***d. The Others is encountered in Dasein’s own Being-with. And Dasein’s Being-I is always a Being-with***

The ontological condition that the Others are encountered in the world is based on Dasein’s ontological constitution: it is Being-in in a with-world, the Being-with [*Mitsein*]. In other words, the relationship between Dasein and Dasein is possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-world (BP 278). The Being-with is said to be the “formal condition of possibility of the *co-disclosure* of the Dasein of the Others for the Dasein which is in each case one’s own” (HCT 238). Therefore, the ontological description of Being-with is not based on the factual

occurrence of the Others. It does not seek to establish ontically and factically “I am not present-at-hand alone, and that the Others of my kind occur” (BT 156). In fact, “Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factically no Others is present-at-hand or perceived. Even if Dasein’s Being-alone is Being-with in the world”. Thus, “the Others can *be missing* only *in* and *for* a Being-with” (BT 156-7).

## 2. Dasein’s everyday Being-I and the Others

There is an internal tension within the structure of Being-with between Dasein’s Being-one’s-Self and its Being-with-one-another. On the whole, Dasein is essentially a Being-with; because its understanding of Being has already implies the understanding of the Others. Therefore, “knowing oneself” [*Sichkennen*] is grounded in Being-with, which is understood by Dasein primordially. By the same token, Dasein’s Being-I is already a Being-with. Whenever Dasein says “I am”, it also implies the understanding of the Others. It reveals that Dasein and the Others are all Being-in-the-world with one another in the with-world. However, in the analytic of Dasein’s everydayness, Heidegger finds that it is precisely because there is always already an understanding of the Others, Dasein does not come to a genuine understanding of itself. Dasein’s Being-with is the condition that Dasein fails to be itself.

The tension of Dasein’s Being-one’s-Self and its Being-with-one-another occurs in Dasein’s everydayness. On the one hand, being “itself”, Dasein has a

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<sup>47</sup> See HCT 237, “The environing, we said, is not only mine, but also of the Others”.



constant care that one is different from the others. Dasein addresses itself as an “I”, it always understands that this “I” is not the Others. On the other hand, Dasein in its everydayness clings to level off the distance between Dasein’s own Self and the Others’. There is a tendency of making Dasein an average one among the Others.

Dasein’s authentic distantiality [*Abständigkeit*] belongs to Being-with. However, it is hidden from the everydayness because everyday Being-with-one-another stands in subjection [*Botmässigkeit*] to Others (see BT 164). The Being of Dasein is taken away. In the *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger describes that the phenomenon of distantiality is a constant care. In its everydayness, Dasein’s being apart from the others is covered under the ontical obviousness of the “I”. However, “[Dasein] is not aware of it that this kind of Being with the Others is perhaps much more stubbornly and primordially there” (HCT 245). In its own everyday involvement, Dasein is not itself. Instead, Dasein is always the indefinite Others. The Others are there as the structure of Dasein’s Being-with which is not related to whether they are “actually” there. As taken away by the Others, Dasein’s everyday “who” is the “They” [*das Man*]. It is not a particular one, but the anyone, the neuter. This “They”, who is no one in particular and “all” are, dictates the modes of Being of everyday Dasein.

Heidegger applies a series of terms to signify the ways of Being of the “They”. They are “distantiality”, “averageness”, “publicness”, “disburdened”, “leveling down”, and “accommodation”. The “They” tends to eliminate the difference and makes everyone the same. Of course, the sameness of them is just an undetermined familiarity. It is all in this Being of the “They” that Dasein addresses itself as an “I”.

### **a. Distantiality, Averageness and Leveling down**

Being-in a work-world, Dasein is also Being-with-one-another in a public world wherein it encounters itself primordially. It is always absorbed in the everyday multiplicity of concern. In the everydayness, Dasein's care of its distance from the Others is meant either to find "one's own Dasein has lagged behind the Others and wants to catch up in relationship to them", or to find "one's own Dasein already has some priority over them and sets out keep them suppressed" (BT 164). However, this distantiality in everydayness is absorbed by concern and it is dominated by the Being-with-one-another. As absorbed, Dasein has the character of "averageness" [*Durchschnittlichkeit*] which is an existential character of the "They".

The "They", in its Being, essentially makes averageness an issue of this. Everything turns for the "They", and averageness is the issue for it. That it is the structure which Dasein determines Dasein's ways of dealing with the world. Heidegger says that the "They" keeps watching over everything exceptional that trust itself to the fore so that every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed (BT 165). In averageness, the original and primordial self-showing of things get glossed over as something that has long been well known. Heidegger further describes this way of familiarization of matters "leveling down" [*Einebnung*] (ibid.).

### **b. Publicness and the Common World**

The phenomenon of distantiality, averageness and leveling down are existentially interrelated and is constituted by "publicness" [*die Offenlichkeit*] for



the world is primarily a “common world”. The “common world” is not the addition or putting together of several subjects by virtue of some arrangement. Heidegger says:

We say instead the first thing that is given is the common world—the “They”—the world in which Dasein is absorbed such that it has not yet come to itself, just as it can constantly be this way without having to come to itself (HCT 246).

The world is not “personal” to Dasein. Because it is a Being-with and it is primordially given in the common world where the Others are there too. The closest environing world is always the world where roads, strangers, family and work can be encountered. Out of this world, one can then more or less genuinely grow into his own world. Ontically speaking, the common world means the culture and society, in which Dasein is socialized to think and act in certain patterns. In everydayness, Dasein is primarily absorbed in the work-world and the with-world. Thus, Dasein “knows” itself according to its work, e.g. a shoemaker among the thousands of his or her kind. In this way of self-understanding, Dasein is proximally a “They”. Ontologically speaking, not only the ready-to-hand and the Others but also Dasein itself are there in the common world. In this closest world, the self is not the primary concern because the world is dominated by the work and the Others which are the closest to Dasein.

“Publicness” is the way that the “They” interprets the world and its own Dasein. This way of interpretation is further described as “idle talk” [*Gerede*]. Idle talk signifies the most common way that Dasein talks. And talking is primarily based on Dasein’s Being as Being-with-one-another. It is “aimed at

bringing the hearer to participate in disclosed Being towards what is talked about in the discourse” (BT 212). This kind of discourse does not aim at making manifest the matter itself. Hence, the aim of communication takes over the original phenomenon of the thing itself. What is communicated depends only on the common concern and the average intelligibility of the hearer and the speakers; that makes the talked about always familiar. Thus, the primordial relationship to the Being of the matter itself is lost in the idle talk. Heidegger thinks that this kind of communication is only “gossiping and passing the words along” (BT 212). It lacks ground to stand on [*Bodenständigkeit*] and is a complete groundlessness [*Bodenlosigkeit*] (ibid.). It is just “talking over everything while not going ‘into the matters’ and by virtue of an insensitivity to all distinctions in level and genuineness” (HCT 246). However, it is not meant to deceive. It only refers to the factual concern of the everyday Dasein that is a Being-with-one-another.

The “authority” of the public way of interpretation is ontologically revealed as the determination of Dasein’s Being-with. It does not refer to any social institution and such an interpretation has no genuine knowledge of the world. By idle talk, the genuine Being of Dasein’s own is also passed over and closed off. One’s own possibilities for Being are limited in the “They”. Dasein as a “They” is interpreted in the public idle talk is in turn cut off from the primordial understanding of Being of its own.



### **c. Disburdening**

In everyday idle talk, Dasein understands itself as the “They” that is cut off from its own authentic Being. The “They” understands itself in the way that the public says without having its own kind of Being in view. Then, the “They” can have no definite ground to identify any particular Dasein. Heidegger says that the “They” is only an indefinite neuter. It is nobody: not “me”, not the other (see BT 164). The “who” of Dasein as an everyday “They” is therefore deprived from its answerability. Yet it is there alongside everywhere. And according to the way that the public does, “They” presents every judgement and decision as if it is done by its own. Although it seems that “It ‘was’ always the ‘They’ who did it,” as it is pointed out, the they has been no one. Heidegger says, “in Dasein’s everydayness the agency through which most things come about is one of which we must say that ‘it was no one’” (BT 165). In the publicness, the “They” disburdens [*entlastet*] Dasein. In other words, the everyday Dasein is in the “disburdening” [*Seinsentlastung*] of its own Being and becomes an indefinite nobody. Therefore, the answer to the question of the “who” of Dasein is the disburdened, average “nobody”. It has “surrendered” itself in the “They” and understands itself as only as the one among the other. Such a Being is called “Being among-one-other” [*Untereinandersein*].

### **D. Conclusion**

From the above discussion, what is phenomenologically closest to Dasein is the environment that is rendered as the work-world and the with-world. The word “closest” is indeed grounded in Dasein’s “de-severance”. The world and the

entities within it can become “close by” only because Dasein lets them be involved in its world. So, the meaning of “closeness” is only referred to Dasein’s existential spatiality. That is, when a ready-to-hand is used, and when the Others are encountered in the totality of involvement, they become “close” to Dasein. The “closeness” of an entity always implies relatedness with Dasein in its concern, its work. Since Dasein encounters itself primarily in the world, and since the public itself defines the goals and views of Dasein in terms of the world of common concern, all fundamental concepts and expressions which Dasein first forms for itself will also probably be obtained in the world in which it is absorbed (see HCT 248).

Moreover, the “world” as the work-world and the with-world constitute the “wherein” [*Worin*] of Dasein. Describing the world as the “wherein” signifies the hermeneutical self-understanding of Dasein. It reveals Dasein’s Being-in-the-world and it always has its own Being as the issue for Being. Thus, “concern” [*Besorge*] is not only a “wanting to do something”, rather it has its hermeutical meaning when we say, “something concerns Dasein”. Comportment [*Verhalten*] is the word to describe Dasein’s existentiell understanding of its Being. According to the environment, Dasein comports itself in certain ways. The whole structure of Dasein’s encountering to its world constitutes is ontologically “for the sake of” Dasein’s own Being, even though it is only an everyday existentiell self-understanding. Thus, the world that is disclosed as Dasein’s concern is in turn the “wherein” Dasein is absorbed<sup>48</sup>. As absorbed, it is the “They”.

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<sup>48</sup> Heidegger states, “its phenomenal structure shows that the authentic entity of Dasein, the who, is not a thing and nothing worldly, but it is only a way to be. If we



The phenomenological description of comportment of the Being-in-the-world and the analytic of "Everydayness" of Dasein elucidate the "how" that Dasein maintains itself. But "everydayness" stresses more on Dasein's Being-with-one-another and it turns out to be the "They". It then implies Dasein's failure to be itself. It disclosed Dasein as the "concernful absorption" (BT 167) that is "living" among the Others. It is always subjected to the average Everyone—the publicness.

At this stage, we can make sense of Heidegger's assertion, "*Ontically, of course, Dasein is not only close to us—even that which is closest; we are it, each of use, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather for just this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest*" (BT 36). In the above sentence, what is the closest is now determined as the "They" in stead of the "I". Though the "They" is closest to our Dasein, and according to the structure of everydayness, the "They" is inconspicuous. Ontically, the concernful absorption never shows itself as the "They". That is, since one is already the "They", Dasein is not ready to know it is in fact the "They" but it only says, "I am" and this ontically familiar and closeness finally covers up its inauthenticity in its everydayness. Heidegger states, "When Dasein has itself in view ontically, it *fails* to see itself in relation to the kind of Being that entity which is itself" (BT 368). Therefore, Heidegger adds, "Proximally the 'who' of Dasein is not only a problem ontologically; even ontically, it remains concealed" (BT 152).

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follow the component elements phenomenally, we do not come upon an entity but upon the Dasein, insofar as it is in this specific way. This again justifies our designation of the entity which we ourselves are by the expression of Being, 'Dasein'" (HCT 247).

When Dasein says, "I am" in its everydayness, it expresses itself as the "They". Dasein's "everyday Self" ("They-Self") is the "who" who expresses itself. "What expresses itself in the "I" is that Self which, proximally and for the most part, I am *not* authentically" (BT 368). However, does the "They-Self" not belong to the essential structure of Dasein? Yes indeed. We have to understand the "They-Self" in a non-substantial sense. The "They" [*Man*] is only an indefinite "neuter". It does not stand for any substantial entity. It is only a way of Being of Dasein in its everydayness. It only expresses an average, undifferentiated mode of Being. if expressed ontically, the everyday "I" is only an average everyone.

The "They" is a way of Being that is constituted by Dasein's Being-in-the-world. The "They" is not meant to express a certain form of force that is outside of Dasein. Thus, the existentialistic or sociological theories do not apply here. "Being-with" as one of its ontological structure is the root of the "They". Heidegger says, "Being-with and the facticity of Being with one another are not based on the occurrence together of several 'subjects'" (BT 157). Likewise, the "Others" are not the "other present-at-hand" who occur in Dasein's surrounding. They are understood as Dasein-with in the totality of involvement and reference of Dasein's world. It is through Dasein's Being-in in the world that can be Dasein "with" the Others. Therefore, the structural explanation of Dasein's "everyday Self" is not amount to an substantial entity. It is an ontological description of the Being of Dasein. Dasein still *is* itself and has its Being to be. Even in this inauthentic way of Being, Dasein is always "in each case mine".



## Conclusion

What is more astonishing than Heidegger's question of "who", starting from the "I am" and coming to the conclusion that it is not 'I' but the 'they'" (see BT 167)? How do we perceive this "I", if this "I" is not "I myself"? If we ask again, "who" is this "I"? What does it mean? Heidegger would say that this inauthentic self-understanding is structurally determined in Dasein's "everydayness".

Heidegger explains that "everydayness" [*Alltäglichkeit*] is Dasein's average way of existing:

"Everydayness" manifestly stands for that way of existing in which Dasein maintains itself "every day" [*alle Tage*]. Yet this "every day" does not signify the sum of those "days" which have been allotted to Dasein in its "lifetime". Though this "every day" is not to be understood calendrically, there is still an overtone of some such temporal character in the signification of the "everyday" [*Alltag*]. But what we have primarily in mind in the expression "everydayness" is a definite "how" of existence by which Dasein maintains itself "for life" [*zeitleben*] (BT 422).

Everydayness is the "how" that Dasein maintains itself till the end of its life. It has an implication of "*alle Tage*", weekdays, workdays. So that "work" is implied. In our analytic of the "world", we have shown that the "world" is the "work-world" [*Werkwelt*] for Dasein. It does not really mean a piece of work or a task to be done, the work-world is a totality of involvement of Dasein. The work-world only expresses that Dasein exists in the existentiell structure of in-order-to.

That in this sense of the world, all intraworldly entities are either ready-to-hand [*Zuhanden*] or Dasein-with [*MitDasein*] and none of them are present-at-hand. They are “in” the world because Dasein has concern itself with them, i.e., they enter the world when Dasein let them be involved. Hence, in a sense, “everydayness” signifies the way of Being of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world.

Moreover, “everydayness” has a stronger sense in signifying Dasein’s Being-with-one-another. Heidegger always expresses that Dasein is “proximally and for the most part” [*zunächst und zumeist*] in its everydayness. He says:

“Proximally” [*zunächst*] signifies the way in which Dasein is “manifest” in the with-one-another” of publicness, even if “at bottom” everydayness is precisely something which, in an existentiell manner, it has “surmounted”. “For the most part” [*zumeist*] signifies the way in which Dasein shows itself for Everyman, not always, but “as a rule” (BT 422).

“Everydayness” not only describes the way of Being-in in the work-world, but also, describes the way that Dasein understands itself as an average everyone—the “They”. It describes Dasein’s mode of Being that it is “conquered” by the Being-with-one-another. It is a way in which Dasein shows itself for the “Everyman” [*Jederman*].<sup>49</sup> In this sense, the everyday way of Being

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<sup>49</sup>“Everyman” is a play written by the Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal. It is based on the 15 century English morality play. It describes how the main role “Everyman” is save from the summoned of “Death” by his friends “Good deeds” and “knowledge”. The von Hofmannsthal play has been produced at the Salzburg festival yearly since 1920. The reason why Heidegger mention this play is unknown. But by guess, he could means that, just as “Everyman” is put on the stage every



of Dasein is structurally determined to be a “They” without exception. It is not due to any personal weakness but it is grounded in the Being of Dasein. Heidegger calls it the “ ‘subject’ of that kind of Being which we know as concerned absorption in the world” (BT 167). As long as Dasein’s Being is understood as Being-with-one-another, it is “surmounted” under the “dictatorship” of the “They”(BT 422, 164). And this “They” is the most familiar and lies “closest” to Dasein and it seems to be ontically “self-evident”. Even so, the existential analytic of the “who” of Dasein cannot lie on this natural horizon. Therefore, even the answer to the “who” of Dasein is ontically closest as “I am it”, he only takes this as a way of Being. The everyday way of Being of Dasein is called “inauthenticity”. Heidegger says:

As modes of Being, *authenticity* [*Eigentlichkeit*] and *inauthenticity* [*Uneigentlichkeit*] (these expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense) are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness [*Jemeingkeit*]. But the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any “less” Being or any “lower” degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity—when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment (BT 68).

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year as a rule without exception, Dasein’s way of Being in the publicness is also a routine.

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Even though the everyday Being of Dasein understands its Self as a “They” in an undifferentiated way, it still manifests its Being, its existence and mineness. Thus, it is not to be taken as a mere “aspect” (BT 69). The Dasein analytic succeeds to show that even in the mode of inauthenticity, the structure of existentiality—Being-in-the-world, existence and mineness lies *a priori*.

How do we understand the paradoxical way of thinking that even when Dasein maintains itself inauthentically, i.e. the “I” is not myself but the “They”, and it is at the same time its own (or its “mine”)? Raffoul correctly point out that Heidegger applies the term “inauthenticity” [*Uneigentlichkeit*] strictly different from “ungenuine” [*unechtes*].<sup>50</sup> He quotes from *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*:

The Dasein’s average understanding of itself takes the self as inauthentic [*un-eigentliches*]. This inauthentic self-understanding of the Dasein’s by no means signifies an ungenuine [*unechtes*] self-understanding ...The Dasein’s inauthentic understanding of itself via things is neither ungenuine nor illusory, as though what is understood by it is not the self but something else, and the self only allegedly (BP 160).

We have already said that inauthentic existence does not mean an apparent [*scheinbare*] or ungenuine [*unechtes*] existence (BP 171).

In the above quotes, we can understand that even in the “inauthentic” mode of Being, Dasein is still itself genuinely. That means, since Dasein’s “essence”

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<sup>50</sup> Heidegger and the Subject: 236-7.



lies in its existence and mineness (BT 67-8), the phenomenon of Dasein is always its own. However, since Dasein is Being-in in the world, being concernfully absorbed in the world is again a determined "way to-be". In other words, as long as Dasein "is", it has a way to-be according to its world. There is no exception, it is because, Dasein is not a present-at-hand that is indifferent to its Being nor is it worldless. We see there is two different levels of description: in the ontological formal indicative sense, Dasein is always its own and it shows itself in itself as itself whenever it is. The phenomenon of Dasein and the phenomenon of Dasein's saying "I" are always a genuine self-showing.

"Being-lost" is another characteristic of the everyday inauthentic Dasein. Heidegger said, "This 'absorption in...' [*Aufgehen*] has mostly the character of Being-lost [*Verlosenseins*] in the publicness of the 'They'" (BT 220). Heidegger point out that "Being-lost" means that Dasein is "in the first instance" fallen away [*aufgefallen*] from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self. "Fallenness" [*Verfallenheit*] only means that Dasein is "in" the world. In earlier parts of the *Division One of Being and Time*, Heidegger uses a literally more neutral term "in" to describe the Dasein's Being-in-the-world. However, starting from the fourth chapter, he started to describe Being-in-the-world is a "fall" into the world. This terminological divergence is based on the analytic of the "They". Heidegger said, "Dasein, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection* to the Others. It itself is not; its Being has been taken away by the Others" (BT 164).

Therefore, Being-lost also describes Dasein's being absorbed in the world of work and of the Others. Thus, he further explains that "falling" only means Being-in-the-world. The term "inauthentic" does not signify "really not, or

“Being-no-longer-in-the-world”. It only signifies Dasein’s distinctive characteristic of Being: Being-in-the-world (BT 220). Thus, “inauthenticity” does not signify a “fall” from a “purer” or “higher ‘primal status.’” Neither does it have the ethical signification.<sup>51</sup> Heidegger also points says in the beginning of the treatise, “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence—in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself” (BT 33). Dasein in its inauthentic mode of Being, is always determined in its ontological constitution that it always has its possibility to be.

Dasein’s Being-lost in the publicness signifies the essential structure of “Being-with-one-another”. Heidegger explains that the structure of publicness is “idle talk” [*Gerede*]. It explains the way Dasein in its everydayness understands itself as an indefinite nobody, the “They”. Heidegger said that idle talk is the way that things are publicly interpreted. It constitutes itself in Being-with-one-another. It is just far from letting itself be volatilized to something “universal”. Since it is public, it belongs to nobody and “it is ‘really’ nothing but occurs as “real” only in the individual Dasein which speaks. Since the idle talk does not first arise from certain circumstances which have effects upon Dasein “from outside”. However, when Dasein is a Being-with-one-another, it always performs the idle talk and speaks in the way things have been publicly interpreted. In doing so, Dasein presents itself the possibility of losing itself in the “they” (BT 221). Hence, in the understanding of idle talk, we can understand what Heidegger means by saying that the “They” is a nobody.

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<sup>51</sup> BW: 236.



Furthermore, in §40, Heidegger presents the meaning of inauthenticity more precisely:

Dasein's absorption in the "They" and its absorption in the "world" of its concern, make manifest something like a *fleeing* [*Flucht*] of Dasein in the face of itself—of itself as an authentic potentiality-for-Being (BT 229).

Dasein is inauthentic because it flees away from in the face of its authentic self. It implies that its authentic Being is always understood beforehand. Heidegger then explains, "only to the extent that Dasein has been brought before itself in an ontologically essential manner through whatever disclosedness belongs to it, *can* it flee *in the face of* that in the face of which it flees" (BT 229). After all the negative elaboration, we can understand why Heidegger says,

This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic to this entity. Out of this kind of Being—and back into it again—is all existing, such as it is" (BT 69).

Therefore, Heidegger's motivation of Interpreting Dasein's everydayness of I-saying is, clearly a phenomenological demonstration of the ontological analytic of Dasein. In his refutation to the Cartesian and Kantian *ego* and *I think*, Heidegger strictly follows the phenomenological motto: "To the things themselves!" In the examination of them, Heidegger finds that the question of Being is missing and the ontological difference of Dasein is omitted. In this sense, he criticizes both Descartes and Kant of their incapacity to see the phenomenon of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world.

However, in the ontological analytic of Dasein's saying "I" in its Being-in-the-world, Heidegger finds that "proximally, it is not 'I,' in the sense of my own Self, that 'am,' but rather the Others, whose way of Being of the 'They'" (BT 167). Does Heidegger dismiss the "I am" that we think each of us is? Of course its answer is negative. It is because Heidegger explains that this way of Being is ontologically determined. At the same time, the inauthentic mode of Being belongs also to Dasein's genuine Being—existence and mineness. Thus, his comments the analytic of inauthenticity: "least of all, has our Interpretation been surrendered to an artificial way in which Dasein grasps itself; it merely carries out the explication of what Dasein itself ontically discloses" (BT 229-30).

Thus, the "I am" is still valid to answer the question of "who" of Dasein. However, the phenomenal content is disclosed in the Being-in-the-world. In the ontical or existentiell level, it is always the "I" in the "I am". The Dasein is still mine.

In a phenomenological perspective, Heidegger stresses in *Being and Time* and in *The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic* that Dasein's inauthenticity is neutral and a genuine self-manifestation. However, Heidegger does not think that Dasein's falling into the world is the only possibility of its existence. Since Dasein's constitution of Being is care, it has the possibility of disclosing its Being in its totality and thus, is possible to find itself as a Being-in-the-world which is always lost and falling into the world. This is the "illumination" for authenticity. Authenticity is described in terms of anxiety [*Angst*], death and resoluteness [*Entschlossenheit*].



In the first level, by disclosing itself as a Being-in-the-world, its own being “there” in the world is disclosed. The disclosure of its own Being-there opens up the literal meaning of Dasein’s own existential structure—it is *Da-sein*, to-be-there. That Dasein is “there” in the world, engaged and absorbed in the world and it is “there” for itself. In a sense, this way of self-disclosure shows a way “that Dasein is and has to be” (see BT 171-173).

However, the self-disclosing and self-finding [*sich befinden*] always accompany with moods [*Stimmung*] which is ontically the most familiar sort of thing. In its existence, Dasein’s own Being is the issue and it cannot be indifferent to the self-finding as a “there”. In the disclosure of its own Being-there in the world, Dasein finds itself lost, and being thrown to the world that falling is its own way to be. That Dasein finds itself “not” being authentic, having been lost and has to be so in the future. That makes inauthenticity existentially “not neutral”. It is “not neutral” in a sense that it gives rise to a mood of anxiety.

In the face of its Being-there, lost in the world, Dasein has the possibility to fleet away and fall back to the familiarity and tranquility of the everydayness. Otherwise it can choose “to be itself”, facing the disclosure of its own Being and discloses its own most Being, to be itself authentically. It all starts from anxiety. Anxiety is different from fear [*Furcht*]. It is not related to Dasein’s everyday living. Anxiety is the mood that Dasein has when it finds its “there”, its “that it is and has to be. More astonishing, it is a “there” without “whence” [*Woher*] and “whither” [*Wohin*] Dasein does not know where it is from and where it is going to, only thrownness in the world, only its not being itself is disclosed. Anxiety individualizes Dasein to the extreme, it pushes Dasein to face itself in an authentic sense, not the They’s view, as a “*solus ipse*”. This existential solipsism

is Dasein's pure disclosure in its own Being. This solipsism has no traditional sense other than a pure disclosure of Dasein's mineness.<sup>52</sup>

An extreme self-disclosure in an anxious individualized Dasein is death. Death is the ultimate possibility of impossibility of Dasein, it is most certain and belongs to each Dasein's own. In Dasein's everydayness, it always knows that "one dies" (BT 297). But in this kind of idle talk, "one" means "nobody" and at the end it says, "no, not me." The "certainty" of death is disposed in an ambiguous manner just in order to weaken that certainty. In this way, dying is leveled off and the fear can be relieved. However, this kind of everyday tranquility cannot authentically be restored.

Anxiety can only be restored in a resolution in which death is authentically anticipated. The anticipation of death is different from awaiting its coming. Rather, death is grasped at each moment of self-disclosure and is seen as a structural determination of itself. In anticipatory resolution, Dasein discloses its Being as a Being-towards-death (see §52). It is not "death is coming" but "I am a Being-towards-death" that is disclosed to Dasein.

In the project of *Being and Time*, the explication of the totality of Dasein's Being has to include Dasein's authentic resolute anticipatory of death (BT 274). In this authentic resoluteness, Dasein's Being is open also in its authentic temporality [*Zietlichkeit*]. That Dasein's care for its own Being shows that Dasein is futurally projecting its own potentiality-for-Being considering its end and grasps its past (having been lost in the world—its there-being) at once. This

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<sup>52</sup> See MFL §10.



authentic moment of self-disclosing is an authentic present. In this unitary structure of future, past and present, Dasein's Being's Being is disclosed in its authentic way. Thus, Dasein is ontologically possible to open up itself not in its totality of Being in resolute anticipation of death.

The discussion of authenticity then give rise to a new horizon of time, Dasein's Being is shown to need a further explication in terms of its temporality. Indeed, the sixty sections in the earlier parts of *Being and Time* as a whole is a preparation to the explication of Being in terms of Dasein's temporality. However, our thesis will not go into the detail. For us, what is in question is an understanding of Dasein's Being an "I". For most, the discussion of the problem of "I" is due to an ethical concern: What I cannot *be* myself authentically. In the discussion of authenticity, Heidegger's answer may not be satisfying. Heidegger does not leave us with a guide for being our authentic self in everyday dealings.

He may leave us with a crude yet moving description of the structure of Being-in-the-world, Dasein's facticity. That we are hopelessly absorbed in the everyday dealing and not knowing that in so doing, we become detached from our own selves. That we say "I" in an average manner without giving full commitment to our decisions, our judgements and even our responsibility to ourselves. However, I wonder very much if Heidegger would really engage himself in an ethical issue like that.

It is clear in the text of *Being and Time*, the issue is Dasein's self-opening to its own Being. The understanding of "inauthenticity" in a most literally sense, must be referred to whether Dasein discloses its Being adequately. In everydayness, though there is a pre-ontological understanding, Dasein always

comports itself to the world and its things. It is the structure of Being-in-the-world. On the other hand, "Authenticity" only refers to the disclosure of Dasein's own Being to itself in its totality. This is a complete disclosure of care in the authentic temporality. If the problem is Being and its disclosure, the discussion of authenticity and inauthenticity would be side-tracked when ethical issue comes to the forth.

However, I believe that there is still the space for inference on ethical problems in the light of the Dasein analytic. In Dasein's resoluteness, in the affirmation of death and thrownness, there lies the most lyrical hint and the firmest call for a retrieval [*wiederholen*] of ourselves. When thrownness in the world is the fate of my Dasein, the most challenging reaction to this fate is giving it a resolute affirmation—to my dying and to my Being-in-the-world. Heidegger writes,

Resoluteness constitutes the *loyalty* of existence to its own Self. As resoluteness which is ready for *anxiety*, this loyalty is at the same time a possible way of revering the sole authority which a free existing can have—of revering the repeatable possibilities of existence (BT 443).

How is the choice of resoluteness possible? In *Being and Time*, it seems that Heidegger has never given us an answer. It may deal to his conscious of refraining himself from going into the ethical question. But *Wiederholung* as a strong philosophical stream springing from the Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Jasper and the young Heidegger the existentialistic way of answering the ethical question concerning authenticity may be the most poetical way of walking out from the powerful revealing of our thrown inauthenticity of *Being and Time*.



After all hustles from witnessing Heidegger's existential hermeneutic, we also finds the Delphi inscription "Know Thyself" means no easy inquiry of curiosity, but leads to a difficult road of self-repetition.

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